

THE
SELECTION OF BOOKS
FOR
ADULT STUDY GROUPS

By Margaret Charters Lyon

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PART I

SELECTING BOOKS FOR ADULT READERS

ADDRESSED TO ADULT EDUCATORS IN GENERAL

CHAPTER I .

INTRODUCTION

DELINEATION OF THE PROBLEM

IN THE spring of 1933 a group of adult educators met for the purpose of formulating some of the problems in their field which were most in need of studious investigation. Each person at the conference was participating in the direction or management of a city or national adult education organization and, therefore, was sensible of the deficiencies of the programs.

These workers in the field of adult education described many difficulties; they presented a multitude of unsolved problems. They expressed doubts about the educational philosophy underlying some programs, and cited dilemmas growing out of practical exigencies. As a result, several areas for research were delineated.

There were persistent allusions to one phase of adult education, allusions which were at first specific and unrelated. Leaders said: "Our church groups are tired of the lesson units which we have been sending out. How can we make the next unit more interesting?" Or, "Can any way less wasteful than trial-and-error be found to determine the probable success of the material on economics which we send to our business groups?" Yet other angles appeared: "We have almost stopped suggesting reading references, because everything is either too difficult or too childish for our groups. Give us something that is simple, yet written for adults." "We are not troubled by vocabulary difficulty, but please don't let professors write for us! They make material so remote from life that students refuse to become interested in it." Each educator's program involved reading material for students in one way or another; every use of reading appeared to bring difficulties with it.

As the various problems came to light and solutions were discussed, one common deficiency emerged, namely, the inadequacy of present methods of writing or selecting curriculum materials for specific adult groups. The immediate need was for curriculum materials suited to the particular group of each educator—to groups of textile workers, of church women, of college alumni.

Two basic and prior needs were admitted, however, which had to be filled before the demands of individual educators could be profitably supplied. The first was the need to obtain a method which might serve as a pattern for each educator who wished to study the reading requirements of his adult classes. The second need was for a list of standards to judge the adequacy of study materials. The method of book selection should indicate practical ways of studying books, and of studying groups for whom they were intended. The standards should apply to the sort of expository material used in adult classes.

The discovery of methods for selecting the best reading materials for adult study groups was the general problem set by the conference. The indicated procedure was, first, to distinguish the standards by which different adult groups select reading materials, and, second, to analyze those qualities in specified materials that give evidence of affecting the judgment of readers. The present study is concerned with the solution of the stated problem.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Part I of this study is prepared for the general reader, for the educator whose interest lies chiefly in the practical recommendations. It includes an investigation of pertinent practices in adult education and introduces an experiment in book selection. Part II contains the technical aspects of the solution of the problem. The details of this research study are given in order to provide the information necessary to evaluate the experiment and to apply any phase of it to other situations. The reader of Part I who desires to find substantiation or elaboration of particular statements will be guided by references to Part II.

Part I sketches the status of program planning in this area among adult educators. The survey shows the manner of selecting reading material which was found in a cross section of programs, demonstrates the values that have been recognized in careful curriculum planning, and describes methods that have been found practicable in selecting and evaluating the curriculum. In describing these methods of curriculum selection, the lack of adequate techniques for supplying groups with the proper literature is recounted.

In addition, Part I describes an experiment with a method of studying an adult group's tastes for selected non-fiction material. The experiment furnishes bases for deriving standards of judging non-fiction. At its conclusion, Part I recommends subjects for further investigation.

Part II states the techniques used in discovering and classifying the data upon which criteria may be based. The description of methods, both of analyzing the books used in this experiment and of studying the group that read the books, provides guideposts to other students of adult curriculum materials. The final chapter gathers all of the experimental evidence both from research literature and from this study for the purpose of making a definitive description of each of the standards for judging non-fiction reading material which were found in the experiment.

PROCEDURE FOR SOLVING THE PROBLEM

In solving the problem of procuring methods and standards for selecting study materials, a survey of pertinent literature—research studies, statements of the philosophy and of the practice of adult education—was first made. Then an experiment was conducted to develop a methodology for setting up standards for a single type of literature for a particular type of person.

The subjects for the experiment were a group of forty-five men and women employed under the Civil Works Administration in the spring of 1934. Every subject read three pamphlets on each of four topics dealing with unemployment, war and peace, changing governments, and unstable money. The reader was expected to write criticisms of each pamphlet in accordance with mimeographed instructions. Then he rated each section of the pamphlet and stated his reason for the degree of interest expressed by the rating; he made a general criticism of the pamphlet and gave it a 1, 2, or 3 rating according to his interest in it. Finally, the reader compared the three pamphlets on each topic with one another.

In the meantime, several types of analysis were being carried forward by the author and several assistants, who were selected on the basis of demonstrated ability from among the Civil Works Administration group. Information about the group of readers was collected and tabulated; certain qualities of the experimental pamphlets were studied; and the criticisms of the readers were analyzed as they submitted their reports on pamphlets.

Each subject filled in a questionnaire about his education, occupation, club affiliations, and reading interests. After the answers to each question were tabulated, those facts about the group that showed clear-cut differences were selected for further study. On the basis of this information sub-groups with different backgrounds were formed, and their opinions were examined to see whether their preferences

for pamphlets and their types of criticism differed. Of the six contrasted sub-groups which are reported, two differed in sex, two in education, and two in social science training.

In addition to studying facts about the group, qualities of the pamphlets were investigated. Assistants made a résumé of the content of each pamphlet, described the format, and listed methods used by authors to catch and to sustain the reader's interest. They analyzed the difficulty of each pamphlet with the aid of a chart designed to help tabulate words and sentence structure and essayed the quantity of history and the quantity of figures by counting the frequency of each in the pamphlets. Three of the assistants attempted to judge the pamphlets upon literary merit and upon author's bias in the presentation of controversial information. In order to summarize the collected information, the pamphlets were ranked in their order of difficulty, of quantity of figures, and of quantity of history; and a numerical description of the author's bias was made. The other analyses performed by the assistants remained in paragraph form.

The readers' criticisms of the pamphlets were utilized in various ways. The criticisms indicated the standards which these readers used in judging pamphlets. They also yielded a Pamphlet Preference Index which could be compared with the ranked qualities of the pamphlets. The opinions provided additional information about the nature of the pamphlets. Finally, they were used to reveal reasons for differences in preferences among the sub-groups.

All of the information about the nature of the experimental group, the qualities of the experimental pamphlets, and the opinions of the group about the pamphlets was assembled for one main purpose. The sum total of this information aided in collecting and describing a list of thirty-eight standards¹ for judging non-fiction material. The standards, which are grounded on the experimental evidence offered from the analysis of pamphlets and the study of a group and their opinions, provide a more objective method than heretofore available for selecting books on current controversial issues.

UNDERLYING SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

Since the method employed in the approach to the problem of determining criteria for selecting reading materials is relatively new in its application to educational problems, a brief discussion of the philosophy and resultant techniques is necessary.

The physical sciences of sixty or forty years ago set a pattern

¹ A list of the standards is given in Chap. IV, Table V, pp. 82-83.

of experimentation and did not take due cognizance of interrelationships and of change. The physical sciences have long since relinquished that pattern, but the social sciences, with their culmination in the mechanistic beliefs of behavioristic psychology, are just now beginning to break away from it.

The methods which are being developed by the social sciences are based upon concepts of change, of growth, and of interaction. They were formulated to some extent by Gestalt, or organismic, psychology, which in turn follows discoveries of the new physics. Gestalt psychology points out that the whole is different from the sum of its parts, that a totality has unique properties different from each of its elements taken separately. This concept requires as wide a consideration of the ramifications of a problem as possible. Correlative to the thesis of the importance of wholeness is emphasis upon the importance of the interrelationships of elements with one another. A stick of dynamite and a fuse may be studied, dissected, and described when separate, but no description of the two separately could convey an adequate impression of them when together and interacting.

Motivated by the principles stated above, the scientists of human life—psychologists, sociologists, educators—have searched for methods of describing large units of behavior in terms of many of the elements that contribute to that behavior rather than of one fragment isolated for inspection. One of the most popular devices of the sociologist is the case method, in which all pertinent available information, derived from both tests and records and from opinions of those familiar with the problem, is assembled to show the effect of interacting phenomena. Sociologists are also mapping trends, discovering the usual outcomes of a set of conditions through a composite examination of many case studies.

The present study is an experiment which utilizes some of these newer scientific techniques. It represents one observation among many that are needed. Within the limits of the data at hand, however, the perspective of wholeness, within which interrelations are important, was kept. In brief, the problem was not the determination of a simple linear cause and effect relationship but a necessarily less precise, because more complex, exploration of multiple interrelationships.

In working out the principle of an integrated total view of the problem, the whole field was considered: the relation of a curriculum to adult education, the place of reading in a program, and the need for better methods of selecting reading materials. The experimental

aspect incorporated a comprehensive approach. Readers were instructed to give general as well as analytical impressions of the books they read. Elements were isolated only after study as parts of the total setting. Their interrelationships were kept in mind, even while the qualities of each were noted separately.

Sociological methods were employed. The case study technique was utilized and showed distinct differences between the most popular and the least liked of the reading material. This method contributed data that could not be obtained in any other way. In order to observe general trends, information was massed. Such a problem as the following was set: Given twelve different books introducing all shades of propaganda, and evaluated by forty-five different people, which shade of propaganda did the readers like best? Another problem employing the technique of massing information was: Out of thousands of reasons given for liking or disliking books, which were most often mentioned?

To further the intention of studying as many interrelations in a unit of behavior as possible, this experiment was limited to the careful analysis of the behavior of a small number of readers who examined only twelve pamphlets. However, just as psychologists may acquire a knowledge of the laws of behavior and physicians may learn the nature of a disease from observing a single patient, so we hoped to discover some boundaries of reader judgments through the study of a single adult group. The findings, therefore, are not statistically significant; but they are important not only in providing information about the experimental group and in indicating a methodology for analyzing other small groups, but also in suggesting the characteristics of a much broader field.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present experimental study of factors causing interest in reading has two chief limitations. Its findings are restricted and tentative. And the method is not directly applicable to the needs of other groups.

In regard to the limitations of the findings, a study is rarely able to explore a new field and at the same time to establish definite conclusions regarding the details of its subject. This investigation introduced a technique and collected all available information from previous research on standards for selecting reading material; but definite conclusions about the standards must be formulated by other workers. This study represents the observation of one group, which

read a single type of literature, whereas similar reports upon the interests in various topics of many groups are needed. The present study names thirty-eight standards which are logical areas of investigation, among which only seven areas were inspected. There should be intensive studies of all the criteria, both separately and in relation to other criteria.

Second among the major limitations, the experimental techniques may appear impractical to adult educators interested in solving problems of curriculum selection. In the present experiment, forty-five readers were paid to spend a week making a detailed analysis of twelve booklets. A repetition of this thorough study will not be possible for those experimenters who must deal with volunteer assistance in determining the interest of reading materials. Suggestions are made in Chapter III for adapting the techniques used in this study to other experimental problems and conditions.

ASSUMPTIONS UPON WHICH THE STUDY RESTS

The viewpoint which animated the study of methods for determining the best reading matter for adult study groups is summarized in the following six points.

1. Modern society has problems and conflicts which threaten the foundation of old philosophies and habits. If democracy is to function successfully, it is essential that adults become intelligently informed upon these problems.

2. The issues involved in modern problems must be presented to adults in such ways as to hold their interest, both because the best learning takes place under such conditions, and also because that is the only method through which large numbers of people will be enlisted in the study of these crucial problems.

3. Although many means of communication must be employed in education for modern living, one of the chief tools is reading. Therefore, we must learn how to make reading material interesting, as well as profitable, to all citizens.

4. In many types of experimentation the opinion of the experimental subject is not investigated. But when the object of a study is the selection of books that will be interesting to specific groups, the expressed opinions of typical members of those groups should be accepted as an important basis for the analysis of books. Even though additional unmentioned factors may be considered by the research worker, the verbalized opinions of group members are the only data which they can supply, and therefore are valuable.

5. Although some adult educators believe that in general scientific methods are invalid in their field, we hold that a scientific approach to the curriculum problems of adult education is both desirable and feasible.

6. A scientific investigation of reading standards must recognize the interdependence of various factors upon one another. In addition, as much as possible must be learned about each factor individually. Since the aim of an experiment is prediction, analysis of factors separately and in relationship will lead to that end better than an examination restricted to complete units of subject matter or behavior.

CHAPTER II

THE CURRICULUM IN ADULT EDUCATION

THE problem of this book, as outlined in the first chapter, is the discovery of methods of selecting the best reading materials for adults. The mere statement of the problem raises several doubts which must be dispelled before approaching the problem's solution.

Is a curriculum essential to an adult education activity? Can group members be expected to read? What methods are the organizations of adult education now using in the selection and evaluation of curriculum materials? Are there any practical ways in which the selection and evaluation of materials may be improved?

VALUES OF A CURRICULUM IN ADULT EDUCATION

Adult educators do not often use the word "curriculum"; on the whole, the ideas of the profession are not clearly formulated in regard to it. For the purposes of discussion, however, let us agree on a working definition. *The curriculum in adult education is a planned program of study, set up with methods and materials indicated for the fulfillment of definite aims.* According to this definition, a curriculum—which is only one of the tools of a sound program of adult education—demands several things.

In the first place, a curriculum demands that a group which is participating in a program gather for the serious purpose of inquiring, "What kind of an education are we trying to acquire? What are the aims of our program?" Although the educative process itself may modify the aims that a group sets, the occasional formulation of goals should lend purpose and continuity to a program. Secondly, a planned curriculum necessitates discovering those possible activities and materials which will aid in reaching the goals. The demands of group members for a rich content of courses should be met better than ever before. Thirdly, the methods and materials which were introduced in order to fulfill the original plans and goals must be evaluated to determine whether they actually produced the intended results. The periodic evaluation of programs will indicate which methods and materials were practical and which should be improved.

Not all adult activities need a curriculum in the formal sense of the word. But an informal consideration of the three principles enumerated would benefit all adults engaged in group activities. Application of the requirement, that goals and purposes be discussed and formulated, would clarify the function of each organization in the minds of its members. Many groups which until now have had little in the way of a planned program would profit by preparing reasonable activities and materials to lead toward the goals. All groups that consciously strive to find the best activities and materials should welcome a critical evaluation which will show them how to fulfill the goals more adequately.

READING AS A NECESSARY PROCESS IN GROUP STUDY

People have long been accustomed to absorb information passively through lectures or reading. Many of them have not yet realized how little they learn that can be applied to their problems when they sit still and let words bombard them. But they must surely discover before long that, in order to attain the worth-while satisfactions which they expect from study groups and other agencies, they must expend some effort themselves.

In the creative fields, participation in group activities has become a fact. Ladies and gentlemen who listened politely to cultured lecturers discuss art in the last century are superseded by women—and men—with sticky fingers and paint-daubed faces, who are thoroughly enjoying themselves while learning about form and color through the medium of paint or clay.

The move for taking part in the discussion of social questions has not kept pace with discoveries in the field of play. Although people are prone to talk about public problems, most of them have not searched for materials to help solve the problems. They are not yet beyond the stage of asking equally ignorant neighbors for opinions or of holding as sacred the insight of the cartoonist in the daily paper. They are still like the art students of an earlier day who listened to lectures or talked about pictures with no experience in accumulating information of their own with which to evaluate the lectures or the pictures.

When citizens are ready to seek intelligent answers to social problems, many activities must contribute to furnishing the facts and awakening a state of mind which will enable them to draw reasoned conclusions. Lectures, trips, exhibits—all have their place in enabling people to understand the subjects in which they are interested.

Most important of the information-yielding mediums is reading. The study of a problem through the words of thoughtful writers gives a richer background more efficiently than does any other method. Written records do not share many of the handicaps of the less permanent agencies of platform, microphone, and movie reel. Literature provides detailed and definite information. It must guard its accuracy, because readers may easily return and check it. It can be studied and kept for reference.

So essential, indeed, is the ability to give or to gain information through the medium of the written page that one of the chief functions of the schools is the teaching of reading; and by far the greatest concentration of effort of those who wish to reach the public is upon preparation of printed matter.

Many surveys, as well as the practical experience of those working with adults, have demonstrated the fact that most people do not sufficiently utilize the facilities of reading to increase their information. Whether the failure to learn adequate reading techniques may be laid at the door of the schools or elsewhere, it is evident that one great weakness in the equipment of the majority of people (college graduates as well as elementary school graduates) is the inability to extract a full meaning from the printed page and to enjoy the process.

There are two principal reasons for these inadequacies in reading. One is deficiency in the skill of reading. The other is a lack of interest due to a training which failed to demonstrate the practical value of books. A large number of people literally do not know how to read in any meaningful sense. They do not have the vocabulary; it is hard for them to pick out important points in involved paragraphs; material without human interest elements (i.e., not directly related to their interests) seems dull and wordy. An editorial in *The New Republic* [4]* several years ago answered critics who claimed that the tabloid newspapers, which contain simplified concepts and a dramatized style, were luring readers from the other papers. The magazine editor had gathered statistical evidence to show that "the tabloids marshal a whole new army of readers of their own." The writer added the hypothesis that through the guidance of the tabloids this army is gradually learning to read the more complex newspapers.

Although most study groups may not be composed of tabloid

* Throughout this chapter numbers in brackets refer to bibliographical references to Chapter II, as given on pages 32-33.

readers, the members all too frequently do not have the background of concepts and skills necessary to read the books that are ordinarily recommended. Their normal reading interests are satisfied by *The Saturday Evening Post* and Gene Stratton Porter rather than by *Harper's* and Ellen Glasgow.

Many group members who have the ability to grasp most of the reading suggested by their leader are not interested in following his suggestions. It would appear that the conditioning of past years, when reading often took the form of dull assignments upon topics of no apparent significance, had caused them to rebel against anything which looked like an assignment. A tactful but determined group leader may plan a long-term campaign in which this disagreeable mind-set is overcome. Covert allusions to fascinating material on their level and occasional requests for reports on brief and easily obtained articles may lay the foundation for discussion based on articles, later on books, and finally on problems which demand information from many sources.

There are two alternative, or two parallel, procedures for adult education in reading techniques. On the one hand, leaders can teach students to read better; on the other hand, they can give them the type of material that they already like to read.

Several courses in remedial reading have been offered to adults, chiefly to college students. The grateful testimonials [6] written by students who entered the classes unwillingly and remained to rejoice in their improved efficiency suggest the potential demand for a course in Efficient Reading.¹ The tremendous success of public speaking classes which aim to overcome deficiencies in speech presents an encouraging parallel.

When it is not practical to offer a course designed to improve reading habits, every leader can encourage timid readers by giving them brief, simple, and interesting books or articles on the topics that the group is discussing. The first source of information about appropriate material may well be the Readers' Advisory Service, developed by librarians in forty urban libraries. Current magazine articles are readily discovered through the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature*, which is on the reference table in every library. The best pamphlets on many topics were selected in 1934 by the Readers' Advisory Office of the Cleveland Public Library [3], in a booklet entitled *Readable Pamphlets*. The bibliography, *Books of*

¹ Such a course was reported at the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore, Maryland. [5]

General Interest for Today's Readers [9], classifies books under many headings and contains delightful annotations. Each of the latter sources indicates the easiest treatment of each topic. With such aids as these, groups can be led to read and the scope of the selections can be broadened as the members' habits become established.

PRESENT STATUS OF THE SELECTION OF CURRICULUM MATERIALS

The preceding pages have stated that most adult educational organizations need to formulate goals and then to provide abundant materials and opportunity for activities which would aid the participants in reaching the goals. The thesis has been set forth that reading materials can contribute vitally to programs provided group members are able to read and to become interested in the content of the literature. In technical educational vocabulary such literature is known as curriculum material.

This study does not cover the whole range of curriculum problems in adult education. Nor can it apply to more than one field the technique later proposed for selecting reading materials. But the whole status of adult education curricula and the whole problem of selection of materials are so very new that a review of the present status of the selection of curriculum materials seems in order before proceeding to the main problem of this study.

In passing, it may be noted that behind the problem of selecting materials is the equally knotty task of producing books and other printed matter that are readable. After the data gathering of this study was completed, a research project in readability, financed by a foundation grant, was set up at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Many adult programs incorporate printed material in their study plans. It appears desirable and pertinent to know what provisions educational organizations now make for selecting materials that are within the ability and interest range of their study groups. A correlative topic for investigation was the ascertainment of methods used by organizations to evaluate² the success of their recommended material.

In order to investigate these questions, William Kolodney, an adult education administrator and a student at Teachers College, has

² In order to avoid confusion of thought, it should be pointed out that selection of new material and evaluation of old are actually part of the same circular process: we evaluate now in order that selection may be improved next time; or we evaluate in order to modify the criticized material before it is finally selected for wide use.

permitted me to examine and to report upon the responses to a letter which he sent out in the spring of 1934.³ H received replies to sixty letters from forty-seven prominent adult educators throughout the country concerning the selection of the curriculum material that they used and their methods of evaluating its effectiveness.

Twenty-eight of the adult educators who responded to Mr. Kolodney's letter were using written curriculum materials.⁴ Twelve of them stated that materials were prepared by the group directing the programs at either national or local headquarters. Nine said that instructors prepared the written content of their courses of study. Seven educators utilized printed material.

The letters contained many specific suggestions for obtaining curriculum content, some of which will be reported.⁵ Two examples of the preparation of materials at national headquarters by the group directing the program will be cited. Also, two methods of preparing books with the aid of a class will be illustrated. Then a procedure for selection of printed material will be stated. The first illustration of the preparation of materials at headquarters follows.

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs set as a ten-year objective the study of economics, especially in its relation to the individual woman and her community. With this major aim agreed upon, curriculum materials were prepared by experts under the guidance of the educational director, Frances Cummings, and were distributed to the thirteen hundred clubs in response to demands for material upon certain topics.

A common practice was stated by Grace Coyle, at that time executive head of the Laboratory Division of the Young Women's Christian Association, who said in a letter, "In some cases when we are preparing material here at headquarters we send it out to a selected group of local secretaries for use and criticism before it is finally published."

S. M. Keeny, secretary of the Association Press of the Young Men's Christian Association, described a method of preparing a book which grew out of practical experience with groups. His letter to Mr. Kolodney is quoted:

³ The letter is given in Appendix II E.

⁴ Nineteen of the forty-seven adult educators who responded were in a supervisory capacity where no courses were offered.

⁵ On the basis of information suggested in the letters, each of the persons named in this section of the report, except P. N. Youtz, was interviewed by the writer.

Much of the material which we use in discussion groups or formal classes is developed experimentally by working along with those interested in the problem.

For example, in working out one book an effort was made to discover those local associations where leaders were meeting together for preparation of materials, in this case for Bible study. These weekly meetings were used as the centers through which problems were isolated and outlines prepared. Each week the teachers of boys' groups came together to prepare the outline for a lesson on a topic in which the members of their groups were interested. After preparation, each leader went before his own group with the outline, trying it out on the members, and reporting its success the next week to the leaders' group. The completed outlines from these experiments were sent to an editing group, who put the material into the form in which it finally appeared in publication.

A more direct approach for study group collaboration in preparing materials is described in an article by P. N. Youtz [18], in which a book grows out of interchange of ideas between an author and his discussion group.

Adults—well informed, intelligent, serious readers—are brought together in groups of twenty-five to one hundred to work out books. The author brings the central concepts and tries them out on the people, modifying and adapting them to fit the needs of the group. This is written in book form and published.

The New York Public Library and the People's Institute cooperate in bringing the authors in, paying them for coming. The discussion is led by a trained, artistic leader.

The Child Study Association has a committee for the selection of books, which was described to the author by Marion Miller, education secretary of the Association. It is called the Committee on Bibliography and has about thirty members, all of whom are experienced in parent education or in the field of parent education literature. The committee holds periodic meetings at which three written reviews of each book under discussion are read. The reviews are subjected to critical examination by this committee of experts. If the book is considered inaccurate, trivial, or unsuited to the needs of parents, it is rejected. If it is thought worth while, it may be placed on a reading list for leaders or for their study groups. The list is revised yearly. Its content furnishes recommendations for the curriculum of child study groups throughout the country.

Many methods of evaluating the success of curriculum materials were stated by the adult educators who responded to William Kolodney's letter. They are summarized in Table I.

TABLE I
Methods of Evaluating Curriculum Material
as Described by 25 Adult Educators

| Method | Number Stating Method |
|---|-----------------------------|
| I. In the qualitative judgment of success of materials, the data employed were: | |
| A. Student opinion | 4 |
| B. Instructor opinion (no stated basis for judgment) . . | 5 |
| C. Instructor opinion (specific factors cited were): | |
| 1. Amount and quality of discussion | 3 |
| 2. Quality of students' work in exhibit | 1 |
| 3. Attainment of general goals, namely: | |
| a. Changed living | 2 |
| b. Widened horizons | 1 |
| c. Culture | 1 |
| d. "Results" | 1 |
| II. In the quantitative measurement of materials, the instruments used were: | |
| A. Attendance count | 3 |
| B. Tabulation of students' answers to questionnaire . . | 1 |
| C. Response on examination | 1 |
| D. Number of books sold | 1 |
| E. Growth demonstrated on rating scale | 1 |

When adult educators were asked how they decided which curriculum materials were successful with their patrons, they frequently replied in general terms. Nine said merely that they obtained the opinion of students or of instructors upon the materials. A few educators were more specific and gave some of the factors that determined instructors' judgments. These factors were the quality and amount of discussion stimulated in class, the quality of workmanship which the course of study inspired, and the extent to which certain general goals of adult education were achieved.

The quantitative measurements of success listed under II in Table I in most instances deal with the success of a program or a course, rather than with the success of study materials. The criterion of large or small attendance is frequently applied, but its weakness as a measurement of the value of courses is admitted by those who

sponsor programs. Likewise, the criterion of the number of books sold is open to the objection that a large or small number is slight indication of the value of the book to the reader. The questionnaire which was mentioned by one educator dealt with the broad outcomes gained from attendance at the adult school, rather than with the narrow outcomes of particular courses or books. The only two methods listed which might show the specific value of curriculum materials were the use of rating scales for checking progress and examinations.

These methods of evaluation are the expression of pioneers in a new field who are close to their work and who believe that the intangible outcomes from education are frequently the most vital. Most of these leaders would agree with the last quotation below, saying that it is impossible to isolate one factor and to maintain that it is the cause of growth in a student. They believe rather that all the educational processes, proceeding simultaneously, produce a more or less immeasurable improvement.

The following quotations reflect attitudes expressed in the letters concerning methods of evaluating the success of courses.

In preparing material or in advising on programs, we lay particular stress on meeting study groups on their own ground, and on making the study process one of extending or deepening existing interests rather than of introducing interests entirely alien to the members. . . . The measure of success is the extent to which the study outline and the material provided with it succeed in arousing responsible interest; and that means an interest that links itself to the situations which members of the course have to meet in their own lives.

In regard to determining the success of the books we use, our judgment is based largely on the quantity and quality of discussion which the reading provokes. In groups as small as ours, it is possible to watch carefully the individual reactions.

The greater majority of our students remain with us for several years. It is our judgment that the important result of these courses is not merely information, but a process of reorientation. We have from time to time in the past distributed questionnaires, and the returns always show this result to be uppermost.

We subject ourselves to constant criticism. If at the end of a class I feel I have failed to hold the interest of the young people, I try to analyze the reasons for this. In my own case it is usually because I fly too high and get away from connection with the young people's experience. The other members of our group would, I think, give the same answer.

The final evaluation must come in the awakening of the student. As one may become interested through woodwork, another through geography or history, and another through singing games, gymnastics, and so forth, it is a little hard for the individual teacher to know what part his courses have had in the end results. My own feeling is that such success as we have is due to the many channels through which we reach the individual, and most especially through the "home life and relationship of equals" so emphasized by the Danes. It will take a generation to show what the effect of such teaching, plus our effort to build up economic life, will be in this section.

Although the letter addressed by William Kolodney to the adult educators asked for information concerning their methods of evaluating curriculum materials, the answers were couched in terms of evaluation of the whole adult program. It is probable that the writers had used no specific devices which they could describe. The persons who responded are among the leaders in adult education in the nation and possibly represent superior practices. Even if the reports of these educators are merely considered typical, they indicate that methods for determining the effect of curriculum materials upon readers have not been formulated or practiced generally in adult education.

The spirit of adult education as shown in these quotations is invaluable in any interpretation of the results of programs. The firm insistence upon recognition of the value of changing the attitudes and increasing the joy of students, together with the realization that a combination of factors contributes to the desired results, should guide any attempts at appraisal. But this general sort of appraisal is not enough; the agencies that finance adult education organizations will demand tangible evidences of specific benefits derived from its programs. Directors, too, will need proof of the success of some of their methods and of the failure of others. Separate evaluations of distinct phases of the program should be planned. For instance, methods of evaluating the phase with which this study is concerned, that of the curriculum, should be evolved. Some techniques that have been worked out by adult educators will be suggested.

The evaluation of a program is the last step of a process which must be viewed in its entirety in order to be judged fairly. The evaluation of the success of reading materials is dependent upon these processes: ascertaining the purposes of the program, recognizing the needs of participants, and supplying literature that meets certain specific requirements. Recommendations for improving the curriculum in these areas will be given.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OBTAINING A CURRICULUM FOR AN ADULT
EDUCATION PROJECT

The meaning of the term *curriculum*, as previously defined, includes much more than mere reading matter in a course. In order to obtain a curriculum, it is necessary for an adult education organization to erect goals, to make a wise selection of reading materials, and then to evaluate the materials and the organization's progress toward attaining the goals. Another step should be included if proper goals and proper materials are to be selected: the leaders of the organization should learn as much as possible about the community and the groups who will pursue the program.

Recommendations for following the steps incident to obtaining an adequate curriculum for an adult education organization or study group will be discussed in the following pages under these heads:

- A. Determination of the goals for an adult education program.
- B. Study of the community and the group for whom the program is intended.
 - 1. Survey for the purpose of gaining general information about the group or community.
 - 2. Survey to detect the interest of adults in activities or in subjects.
 - 3. Tests to ascertain various abilities of group members.
 - 4. Analysis of shortages in the lives of group members.
- C. Selection of study materials.
 - 1. Methods of writing materials.
 - 2. Methods of selecting printed materials.
- D. Evaluation.
 - 1. Evaluation of program. Discovering changes in habits; use of interviews, diaries, check lists; records of projects.
 - 2. Evaluation of materials: Testing the effect of materials on students; utilizing the leader's opinion; utilizing the study group's opinion.

These topics will be treated in order.

A. Determination of the Goals for an Adult Education Program

The first section of this chapter emphasized the need for working out definite plans and goals for whole organizations and for each group within the organization. Every group that meets should have its energies focused in a direction which the members agree is worthy. Goals should be a living, motivating part of all work. And they should be revised as purposes change or grow. The following illustration shows how one organization utilizes its resources in planning its programs.

Example:

An integral part of the Young Women's Christian Association program is its planning committees. Purposes are formulated in small groups, are carried to larger groups, and after reaching the attention of the national organization, are carried back to enrich the programs of all member branches.

At the Washington, D. C., branch of the Y.W.C.A.,⁸ each study group or club elects a representative to meet other representatives in the department. In the spring all of the representatives discuss the work of the past term, make suggestions for improving the work or for adding other types of activities, and map out goals and methods for the following term.

Ideas worked out by the local Y.W.C.A. departments of Girl Reserves, business and professional clubs, education, etc., are pooled yearly at regional conferences. There are biennial conventions at which the best ideas, developed by all of the departments over a two-year period, are discussed. At the summer convention a survey of progress is taken, aims are re-evaluated and re-interpreted, and methods of procedure are developed.

In the fall of the year all of the people at the Washington branch of the Y.W.C.A. who act in any administrative capacity—as group leaders, department directors, active workers—meet in general conference. The recommendations of the regional or national convention are presented. After several days' conference upon general and specific purposes, the various departments proceed to complete the organization of their work.

Any department's program, then, will be based upon three sources: (a) the previous year's experience, including recommendations from group representatives, (b) the general purposes of the organization, which were derived both from contact with other branches and from the integrating meeting in the Washington branch, (c) the purposes and interests of the new groups, as they are formulated during the term.

B. Study of the Community and the Group for Whom the Program Is Intended

Since any group is part of a neighborhood or community, the collection of adequate knowledge about the group's patterns of thought and action brings the leader of even a single group to see the desirability of studying its community background of work and recreation.

An educational program should be based upon the interests of group members, upon their intellectual achievement and ability, upon the previous experiences that provide materials for enrichment of concepts, and upon their immediate needs.

No prescription for becoming acquainted with a group can be

⁸ Interview with Nettie Anderson, General Secretary, Y W.C.A., Washington, D. C., February 7, 1935.

made. The examples given here draw much of their meaning from the fact that they grew out of real situations in answer to problems that needed solving. The methods are important and valid when, and only when, they are part of a total educative setting. The following examples are suggestions rather than patterns.

1. Survey for the purpose of gaining general information about the group or community

Most leaders gather general information about the education, age, occupation, marital status, sex, and interests in reading or other pertinent activities of the group. There are sometimes occasions for collecting more extensive information than this; there are frequently opportunities for making greater use of the information already collected than is appreciated.

Examples:

In this study the usual information collected about the experimental group was used as one of the chief keys to the solution of the problem of reading standards. (See Chap. V, pp. 137-41 and Appendix II E.)

Methods of making a thorough community study are amply illustrated in "Middletown." [12] Extensive data were gathered under the general topical headings, "Getting a Living," "Making a Home," "Training the Young," "Using Leisure," "Engaging in Religious Practices," and "Engaging in Community Activities."

In order to write a book upon the methodology of social investigation, Luther Fry [7] studied all of the literature upon community surveys. The book contains an extensive bibliography, as well as information about planning a study, consulting available sources, observation, the interview, questionnaire, analysis of findings and interpretation to the community.

2. Survey to detect the interest of adults in activities or in subjects

A paradoxical problem presents itself when directors try to base programs upon the interests of patrons. They wish to find interests, because they believe that any program which runs counter to interests, or which is injected where there is no trace of interests, will probably fail. On the other hand, they can find few well-defined interests upon which to build a program. The solution to the paradox lies in ascertaining patrons' prejudices against some activities and their indications of latent interest in others. At the same time, other evidence than expressed interests must be studied to show which activities would probably be successful with groups. Various methods for ascertaining the interest of adults are used.

Example:

The Radburn Plan [10] is based upon the satisfying of community demands. A questionnaire was sent to community residents, asking them which subjects they would like to study and which outdoor and indoor recreational activities they would enjoy. A program was built on the basis of expressed interests. Careful checks designed to indicate the response to the offerings were made. When more demands arose, new recreational opportunities were opened.

As a supplement to the questionnaire method of plumbing interest, "word of mouth" was relied upon to furnish further guides to selection. As Robert B. Hudson expresses it, "The results of the questionnaire were submitted to the committee concerned. On the basis of the interest its members may have heard expressed by residents, plus the amount of interest expressed on the questionnaire, the committee selected the activities to be presented." [10, p. 83.]

3. *Tests to ascertain various abilities of group members*

The public school system has demonstrated that an immense amount of human waste can be avoided if accurate information about pupils' abilities is obtained. The schools administer intelligence tests that enable the placing of children in surroundings most congenial and worth-while for them as individuals. They give reading tests that show teachers how to help children to adjust to an important aspect of their educational environment. The schools also administer subject matter tests that immediately reveal weaknesses and points of advancement which teachers must consider. Furthermore, they work out methods of studying children's emotional natures in order to aid them in well-rounded development. Similar estimates of the ability of adults may prove valuable.

Example:

During the economic emergency it has been possible to conduct experiments with unemployed adults in ways which should produce suggestive results for all administrators. Major centers have been established in Minneapolis and in New York City which have tried out all of the known methods for studying the abilities of adults in order to recommend better vocational and recreational adjustment for them [1] From this elaborate testing have come some practical recommendations for methods of discovering and utilizing abilities.

While it is not recommended at the present time that adult educators give as many tests to their students as do either the public schools or the research centers, estimates of some of the abilities and aptitudes of adult students should be made. Whenever possible, a few simple tests, showing reading ability in particular and background

of knowledge in general, should be given. Facilities should be present for administering intelligence tests when students express an interest in having an indication of their mental ability.

4. *Analysis of shortages in the lives of group members*

Most programs for adult education are not based solely upon the expressed interest of community groups, as is possible in the unusual organization of the "planned community" of Radburn, New Jersey. Leaders usually sense certain deficiencies or inadequacies in the lives of their students and seek to fill them. On the basis of known deficiencies, they frequently set out to guide their group in directions beyond the present vision of the students. Adult educators enter communities which have no apparent interest in art and lead members to demand concerts or an art gallery. Or, they establish homes in the center of a delinquency area and inspire an interest in wholesome recreation. Almost every educator can furnish instances of his realization of shortages in the habits, the attitudes, or the interests of his community and can tell how he is striving to lessen them.

Since adult educators so often recognize shortages in the lives of their students and educate in view of them, the shortages should be determined carefully and should be stated.

Example:

A method of determining shortages and of founding an educational program on them is exemplified in a thesis [13] in which a program is recommended for cotton mill workers. A picture of the community as it is today is clearly drawn. Ideals of what such a community might become are discovered from the writings and talk of regional "frontier thinkers." The difference between the existing picture and the possible one as stated by authorities is subtracted and labeled shortages. Then an adult education program is recommended, in which ways are shown whereby the shortages may be lessened.

C. *Selection of Study Materials*

Wise selection of curriculum materials will be determined by the goals which the leader and the group have formulated; by knowledge of the interests, abilities, and needs of the group; and by the wisdom incorporated in applying the discovered principles to the preparation or selection of materials.

1. *Methods of writing materials*

Many leaders or organizations prepare their own curriculum materials. Careful procedures should be evolved for securing adequate manuscripts. The adult educators who responded to requests for

information used the following methods for preparing curriculum material:

Examples:

Materials were prepared by experts, in the light of objectives set up by the organization and of a general knowledge of the character of its membership.

Materials were written by professional authors who obtained criticisms from experienced leaders.

A book was written cooperatively by group leaders in conference after a trial of tentative outlines with study groups.

A book resulted from the discussions of a group led by an author who had a stenographer taking notes.

2. Methods of selecting printed materials

A considerable amount of printed matter which contains material for courses of study is on the market. The material must be selected by people who are familiar with the groups for whom it is intended. Although the task of selection is generally delegated to a leader or to a committee, an improved method is actual trial of the material with all or part of the group who will use it. No methods for basing selection on group cooperation have been described in the adult education literature. Two examples of possible utilization of group aid in selecting its reading are drawn from the present study.

Examples:

A committee from the study group may be asked to evaluate potential curriculum material. This evaluation should be made in terms of a guide sheet. (See Chap. III, Table II.) Included in their evaluation should be a statement of each book's interest to them. The leader or the committee can then use the analyses to pick the best book for the group to study.

If the whole group is asked to criticize the material that it studies, standards for future book selection may be derived from its criticisms. These standards may be obtained in the following five steps.

1. List the books in the order of their popularity. (See Chap. IV, pp. 87f.)
2. Study the specific qualities of the books, such as, presentation of figures, type of explanations, difficulty. (See Chap. V, pp. 115-26.)
3. Study comments of the readers, and check their opinions of books against the objective analysis of the book. (See Chap. V, pp. 132-37.)
4. Examine the background of different readers. (See Chap. IV, pp. 84-101, and Chap. V, pp. 137-41.)
5. Combine the information about books, readers, and their tastes into general patterns or guides which may be followed in later selection. (See Chap. V, p. 137, and Chap. VI.)

D. Evaluation

Directors should make periodic check-ups of the success of their programs in general and in specific phases, in order to obtain the satisfaction of seeing progress and to improve upon methods. Among the indications of the success of a whole program are, first, measurable changes in the lives of the members; second, results of questionnaires or check lists; and third, comparable records of projects. The success of the specific phases dealing with curriculum materials may be discovered by giving well-conceived tests, as well as from the opinions of the students and of their leader.

1. Evaluation of program

(a) Discovering changes in habits of a community or group. The habits of a community which might be altered by adult education may be studied from a number of angles. Each organization may furnish information which will reflect such things as selective movie attendance, increased library patronage, changed content of newspapers, increased civic interest as expressed through concrete enterprises, changed leisure time habits, etc.

Example:

The Brooklyn Institute [11] collected information about differences between its students and adults who had not taken courses offered by the Institute. A number of students and non-students of vocational courses were interviewed. The answers of the two groups to the various questions were contrasted in order to find out whether studying vocational courses had an effect upon regularity of employment, amount of earnings, and attitude toward work.

Another group of students was questioned in an interview which was followed by a questionnaire regarding their leisure time activities. The replies were analyzed by separating the data according to different levels of formal education and different courses taken. It was discovered that those who had taken cultural courses were distinctly superior in all educational levels in their use of leisure time.

From among a long list of leisure time pursuits and habits, it was found that the habits of the vocational students excelled those of the non-vocational students only in the amount and kind of reading done in their spare time.

(b) Use of interviews, diaries, check lists. If interviews, diaries, and check lists are carefully prepared and are administered in a manner which inspires cooperation, they will reflect any major changes that have taken place in the lives of group participants. The results should be validated by comparing them with similar records

gathered before the members were influenced by the group and by parallel records of non-members.

Example:

The New York Young Women's Christian Association conducted a study for the purpose of finding out whether attendance at camp had any effect upon the leisure time interests and activities of girls. [16, pp. 7-9.]

The techniques used to discover leisure time interests were: (quoted verbatim)

1. Basic background data serving to define the groups under consideration and to facilitate control of important factors, i.e., age, wage, occupation, education, nationality, religion, community.
2. Check list of interests and activities in terms of degree of interest, participation, and limitation.
3. Check list of social and economic problems, examined for reading, discussion, and study group membership.
4. Spontaneous reports of reading—books, magazines, newspapers.
5. Diary records in half-hour units for three full days—work day, Saturday, and Sunday.

A questionnaire and diary were collected from the same girls a second year, thus demonstrating the general stability of the data and showing occasional shifts in interest.

(c) Records of projects. All leaders should keep records of the development of the program. Accurate reports should be made of significant behavior or remarks of group members which reflect their criticisms of techniques and their development. These records should include accounts of obstacles and methods used in overcoming them. They constitute a biography of the venture and give the best picture of the group's accomplishments. They are valuable, also, in leadership training.

Examples:

The Young Men's Christian Association prepared forms obtaining and preserving opinions upon the value of group programs. Forty criteria for evaluating group activities are listed and illustrated. The leader is required to report the proportion of his group which fulfills the criterion satisfactorily. Examples of the criteria are: "How many tenths of the group have their activities characterized by single-mindedness?" "How many tenths of the group evaluate experiences?" "How many tenths help introduce social changes without introducing disorder?" [8, pp. 1-26]

Dr. Jessie A. Charters teaches parents to help children through a recorded project method. When a project is carried on, the parent is required to answer these questions.

What is the difficulty which you will teach the child to overcome? How do you think the difficulty arose? Is the child's interest aroused? Write down what you tell the child about learning this act. Describe everything that happens as he is learning. [2]

2. *Evaluation of materials*

The success of the curriculum materials employed in the program may be discovered from tests, from the opinions of the students, and from the judgment of their leader.

(a) Testing the effect of materials on students. One way of discovering the clarity and the effectiveness of materials is the administration of tests. One type of examination tests the amount of information that students have acquired. The leader may compose his own factual test, using a simple objective form. If the test is given before the discussion of the textbook, the students' responses to a good test will often show deficiencies in their study materials.

Another type of test measures changes in attitudes. Attitude tests and scales may be used at the beginning and at the end of courses, to demonstrate to both students and teacher what changes have been wrought in their viewpoints. Many tests upon problems which are commonly discussed by adult groups have been published. A few of these are: [14]

Character and Personality Test Series. *Opinions on International Questions*. Association Press.

———. *Opinions on Race Relations*. Association Press.

Katz, D. *Attitude Toward the Law*. University of Chicago Press.

Peterson, R. C. *Attitude Toward Capital Punishment*. University of Chicago Press.

———. *Attitude Toward the Chinese*. University of Chicago Press.

Thurstone, L. L. *Attitude Toward Communism*. University of Chicago Press.

———. *Attitude Toward Honesty in Public Office*. University of Chicago Press.

(b) Utilizing the leader's opinion. The leader's evaluation of the material which his study group used should always be obtained. First, each leader should keep a record of his success with the material: the informal comments of readers and the specific points where he encountered difficulty in teaching should be written. Second, the curriculum director should ask all leaders to respond to questions prepared by him regarding the interest and apparent comprehension of the class as it used the materials, the effectiveness of

different sections, the comparative appeal of different styles of presentation, etc.

(c) Utilizing the study group's opinion. The general value of readers' opinions has been presented before. The use of part of the last meeting in a course as a "testimonial meeting" has been found a satisfactory means of obtaining these opinions. Reader annotation of library cards has, also, been used as an acceptable device for getting the group's opinion.

Example:

The last method was the basis of the Winnetka research with children for grade placement of interest in certain books. [17] Children were asked to write the name of author and title on one side of a card and to give their opinion of the book on the other side. They were asked to make a statement that would tell other children whether or not they would like the book. This method has been adapted by Elizabeth Morriss in her compilation of a book list for adults of limited reading ability. [15]

SUMMARY

The curriculum in adult education is defined as "a planned program of study, set up with methods and materials indicated for the fulfillment of definite aims." This definition emphasizes the value of planning a program, the need of properly selected materials, and the necessity of determining whether the materials and methods actually fulfill the original plans.

The aims of a study group must be formulated primarily on the basis of its own interests and needs. The leader and the group must decide whether reading material is a desirable instrument. they will find that reading is generally an important means of attaining their ends. The group must decide upon the other activities besides reading that should be introduced.

Although formulating the aims and deciding about the use of certain methods and materials is a creative task that rests largely with the group, practical suggestions from the experience of others may be offered in the selection of the best materials to carry out purposes. A survey in 1934 showed that a sampling of adult educators had devised a number of methods for finding the best curriculum materials for their courses. Some of them asked authors to write material to meet certain requirements; others asked group leaders to evolve study materials, using their groups as a laboratory for testing the lessons; still others worked out methods of discovering the printed material which would probably fit the needs of their groups.

The survey showed, too, that educators had formulated some methods of evaluating the success of their programs. These evaluations were usually directed at finding important changes in attitudes and habits which participation in an adult education program might induce. They were almost never directed toward a criticism of a specific device, such as the course of study.

Methods of obtaining and evaluating a curriculum may be recommended. Many of these methods can be illustrated by present practice in the field of adult education, but one phase of the process, obtaining a group's aid in selecting and evaluating reading matter, has no counterpart in practice and must be illustrated from the present study. The recommendations are in four steps.

A. The plans for an adult education organization should be formulated by leaders and representatives of the group. The plans should be based on the previous year's experience, the general purposes of the organization, and the purposes and interests of new groups.

B. The group for whom the program is planned should be studied in order to find its interest, abilities, and needs. A questionnaire or a more formal survey will reveal basic information about group members. Their answers to questions will show the direction of their interests. Tests or informal questions may be administered to ascertain some of the abilities of the members. All of the above sources of information will indicate inadequacies in the past experience or outlook of the members, inadequacies that should be carefully determined and then be frankly faced by leaders.

C. The plans of the group and information about the group will show the areas in which education should take place. If reading matter is to be used, it should be carefully selected. Course of study material may be written by experts who know the type of membership that will use it, by group leaders who try out the material with groups, or by the group itself, from stenographic records of its discussion.

If printed material is to be selected, the members of the group should aid in choosing the material that is most interesting to them. Selection will be more satisfactory if it is based upon the group's criticism of previous books.

D. There are several ways of evaluating an adult education program. Statistics about the recreational and other habits of a group for the period before participation in the program may be compared with the same sort of statistics collected after participation. The figures on attendance, circulation of books, etc., may be obtained from

such agencies as the library, Sunday school departments, or moving picture box offices, or they may be obtained directly from interviews, questionnaires, diaries, or check lists written by group members. The leader, too, can furnish valuable records in a diary of his activities in relation to the project.

The course of study may be evaluated by asking the students to submit to tests which might show the effect of the material on their attitudes and its contribution to their information. The records of the leader may again give a satisfactory picture of the advantages and shortcomings of the material. Finally, the students can play a major part in evaluation by making a careful criticism of the material that they have studied.

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CHAPTER III

AIDS IN SELECTING AN ADULT EDUCATION CURRICULUM

IN CHAPTER II methods which have already been worked out for studying an adult group were stated. It was shown that some techniques for evaluating a total adult education program have been formulated. In the field of the curriculum, several ways of obtaining reading materials have been evolved. Little help could be obtained from practice, however, at the crucial points of selecting that reading which is best fitted to individual groups and of evaluating the strength and weaknesses of the particular material chosen.

Experienced educators, of course, have not been sitting idle, waiting for technicians to tell them what people want to read. The person in charge of planning and preparing program material for a national organization usually possesses a broad understanding of people's preferences which gives him a clue to reading selection. This experience needs to be pooled. It requires validation by experimentation. It also demands formulation in general rules which may be applied to material written for specific groups.

Insofar as the persons who are preparing bibliographies or literature for groups have been analyzing their material and have been studying their groups' abilities, interests, and needs, they have been following the principles enunciated in this study. It is urged that the program chairmen take one further important step. On the basis of the analysis of material and of groups, leaders should state in writing the qualities of specific books that appealed to particular sorts of readers. The equally important antithesis should be stated: namely, which factors caused lack of success of some materials. Such written records would be most valuable if they were contributed to a central clearing house by many workers. This center of investigation would synthesize all contributions into general rules of selection of the best reading material for many types of groups.

The methods which have been worked out in this experiment for studying group members' opinions of the reading material and forming generalizations therefrom will be discussed in this chapter.

Adaptations of these methods to other investigations will be suggested. Problems for further research will also be presented.

METHODS OF STUDYING READING MATERIAL

A leader who follows the procedures suggested in Chapter II for determining the curriculum materials for his adult study group will first establish a goal for the program. The group would preferably cooperate in formulating the goal and in selecting the subject and the topic for study. The leader will then probably assemble as many printed treatments of the topic as possible and find the one that would be most interesting to the group that he will teach.

In order to determine the best materials, it is necessary for the leader to possess three bodies of information:

1. The qualities that make any book interesting or uninteresting.
2. The amount or degree of each quality possessed by the various books that he is considering.
3. The amount or degree of each quality that this particular group demands in order to be persuaded that a book is interesting. With this information at hand, the leader can generally select the book that comes closest to fulfilling the demand of the group for interesting reading.

The present experimental study assembled a list of the qualities that made certain books interesting, discovered the degree of some of these qualities in the books, and estimated the experimental readers' attitudes toward the selected qualities. After the problem has been defined more clearly, these three processes will be described.

The intricacies of fulfilling the requirements of setting up standards may be pictured in the following problem, a problem stated in a form simpler than the actual process of erecting standards.

A definition by illustration. Here in my hand is a book of poetry that was written by a group of fathers and mothers in our Authors' Club. You and I have been reading snatches, admiring the swing of some of it and the originality of other bits. The telephone rings. A city editor of the newspaper has heard about this book of poetry and wishes us to send him a copy of the poem from the book that his readers would most enjoy.

At first this looks like a simple task. I have my favorite poem, and you have yours. I say, however, that your favorite jingles unpleasantly; you claim that there is nothing more trite than the third line of mine. In addition, we realize that neither of these poems might appeal to the newspaper readers. We find ourselves at an

impasse, where our feelings, plus the unorganized ideas that we have, are not sufficient to make a trustworthy decision.

Under normal circumstances we would spend another half hour in spirited debate and would finally compromise on the least objectionable, and probably the most colorless, of the choices. Today, with time to spare, you and I decide to be more thorough in our selection, to try to answer squarely the editor's challenging request that the poem be one which would best represent our group of parents to the public.

After some trial and error, it becomes evident that the selection of a poem presents at least three different problems. We began by trying to discuss them all at once. We now see that we must first decide upon some of the qualities of poetry. Then we must find standards which will tell us what the range of desirability in these qualities is. Finally, we need to know which standards the readers of the poetry will apply when they judge its qualities.

Step 1. Turning through the book, we jot down at random a few qualities of poems: rhythm, subject matter, use of words, figures of speech, and rhyme. These will furnish a starting point and will show the kinds of qualities we must keep in mind in deciding which poem is best suited to the readers. Such a list in itself is helpful, for it enables us to think through the problem, rather than to attack it merely by intuition.

Step 2. Setting down the names of qualities is no more than a beginning. It is necessary to examine the various poems in the light of each element and to ask: What is good rhythm? Which subjects are appropriate for a poem and which are hackneyed? Are some choices of words better than others? How will we tell a remarkable combination of words from one that is just better than average? When are figures of speech acceptable, when undesirable? May poems which have no rhyme be considered real poetry?

In other words, the list of qualities of poetry directed our attention to the things that the readers will judge. They will apply their standards as they evaluate each quality. Our second job is to find how these qualities vary. For instance, in respect to the quality of rhythm, we may ask, what is the poorest rhythm that is accepted by any judge, and what is the best that the readers would recognize? Our answer to that type of question can come from several different sources, of which we select two this afternoon, one based on our own preference and the other on expert advice. We place the poems in a row on the table, in an order from one with the poorest rhythm to the poem

with the best, according to our taste. In the same way we place the poems in order for each of the other four qualities. Before we can rank the poems upon the quality of their subject matter, we ask for help from an English teacher who is acquainted with the opinions of many critics in regard to the best and the least desirable subject matter for poetry. His expert advice guides the ranking of the poems on that quality.

Step 3. The long afternoon is almost over, and we are only now ready to select the best poem, after we have evaluated the quality of all of them. The task should be simple, you say; why not choose the poem that we considered to rank highest upon the most qualities? If our purpose is to select the poem that the newspaper readers would enjoy, we do not know that they would concur in our judgment. A new group of questions arises. Which degree of those five qualities do the readers judge to be best? Do they like the verse that ranked medium in our rating of rhythm; might they be most amused at the rhythm which we ranked lowest; or might they prefer the rhythm that we placed highest? What standards do they apply in judging the qualities of poetry?

In order to answer these questions, we think of the tastes of our friends. But even if we know them, are their tastes typical of the average townsman? We telephone the editor for help. "Yes," he says, "I have always wondered about that, too." We table the question with a promise that when we are in a scientific mood again we will try to discover what kinds of poetry the community prefers. We send the editor four poems, ranking at different points on the scales of quality, which we think would appeal to the tastes of four different types of newspaper readers.

Discovery of the Standards That Readers Use in Evaluating Material

Before we could discuss the selection of poems, it was found necessary to state the various qualities upon which poems should be judged. Only five elements were listed for the simple task of selecting a poem. When the selection and evaluation of large units of work depend upon the adequacy of topics which form the basis for analysis, the need for as complete a list of topics as possible is obvious. In accordance with this belief, the present study was chiefly concerned with the determination, definition, and classification of topics upon which criteria for judging literature are based.¹

¹ See Chap. IV, pp. 71-83.

When interviews and books on adult reading were consulted, all devices for estimating the value of general non-fiction literature were noted. The experimental study was based, however, upon an analysis of books about current controversial problems. This field was the focus of attention for several reasons. First, there is a widespread interest on the part of adult groups in current problems. Second, generalizations from introductory treatments of current problems might be more readily applied to other fields than generalizations from a study of the more specialized writings, for example, of parent education or agricultural extension. Third, less has been discovered in the field of social education than in other branches which have drawn many learners for the past quarter of a century.

Four different sources of criteria were examined. One was in the field of opinion, the data for which were collected from interviews and reading. Three were derived from an experiment in which readers judged pamphlets before reading them, then made general criticisms of the pamphlets after reading them, and finally gave detailed criticisms of sections of the pamphlets.

The writings of adult educators, librarians, and publishers were combed for suggestions. Many people who prepare or select manuscripts were interviewed. The survey of literature and the interviews showed many deficiencies in knowledge or in adequate analyses. It became evident that first-hand information must be obtained. Through the service of Columbia University, a group of college people employed in the Civil Works Administration was assigned to the experiment.

The Civil Works Administration group of forty-five workers read twelve pamphlets upon current problems: problems of war and peace, unemployment, changing government, and unstable money. Each of these four subjects was discussed in a series of three pamphlets. The task of the readers, as explained in the mimeographed instructions, was: "To discover your interest in various pamphlets, your personal reaction to them. You will be asked to rate them. But your own feeling, which you are called upon to state in answer to 'Why' or 'Reason,' is even more important than your rating."² Instructions covered uniformities in procedure and permitted honest emotional and intellectual reactions.

The influence of subject matter upon the interest in particular pamphlets was recognized and was accounted for as far as possible. Before any of the pamphlets were circulated, the readers were told

² See Appendix II A.

to follow two directions in regard to the four subjects dealt with by the pamphlets. First, they checked any of the topics that they would ordinarily be interested in reading about. Second, they ranked the topics in the order of interest to them. Only three out of forty-five readers were interested in no topics, and eleven were interested in all five. After they had finished reading the pamphlets, the readers were again asked to rank the topics, this time in the order in which the pamphlets had interested them. (See Table X.) The average rankings before and after reading were similar. The topic of unstable money was consistently unpopular. The topics of unemployment and of war and peace exchanged first ranks but were both popular. In all interpretations of results the influence of the subject as indicated in the interest rankings should be recalled.

Three different methods were used for eliciting the reasons for interest in each pamphlet. First, after studying a booklet, the reader checked each section⁸ on a five-point scale, from "very interesting" to "dull." As he made each check upon the scale, the reader was asked to record why he had made the rating. These sectional reactions showed in detail the standards used in judging material. Then a general criticism in the form of a brief report concerning total impressions of the pamphlets was requested. This uncovered points which might have been overlooked in the section reactions and reinforced some of the opinions expressed in the detailed analysis. Finally, since three pamphlets upon the same topic were distributed at once, each individual recorded what is termed his "snap judgment" preference. Here he stated which pamphlet appeared so interesting that he wanted to read it first.

With the aid of three workers, the data from the readers' criticisms were assembled. The different reasons for liking or disliking the pamphlets were recorded verbatim. The large number derived from section reactions were written on separate cards for easier classification. The general criticisms and the snap judgment preference of each pamphlet were catalogued in some detail on separate sheets. This presented succinct pictures of the opinions about each book.

The author unified the classification of the reasons, which had been collected by three assistants. Thirty-eight standards dealing with different aspects of judgment were distinguished. As the standards are now expressed in brief topical headings, they are no more than names of qualities of books. The readers' positive and negative criticisms which were classified under each heading interpret them

⁸ Each pamphlet was divided into from eight to twenty-nine sections.

as standards to be applied to the evaluation of qualities. The topics do not become real standards until they are defined by the readers' comments. The different comments are given in the classification under each standard in Chapter VI.

In the brief survey of the methods of discovering topics for criteria, four different sources were used. Each source suggested or emphasized topics partially or completely ignored by others. The first source of topics for standards was the opinions of writers and workers in adult education. They named most often (all lists are ranked in order of frequency of mention):

1. Techniques for getting and holding reader interest.
2. Difficulty of concepts.
3. Dramatic style.
4. Size of the book (its brevity, in particular).

However, as the experimental readers commented upon the different sections of pamphlets, they mentioned most often:

1. Clarity of explanations.
2. Selection of material.
3. Techniques for getting and holding reader interest.
4. Methods used in introduction for awakening interest.

In the general criticisms, the experimental readers' emphases were somewhat different. They commented most frequently upon:

1. Difficulty of concepts.
2. Quality of information presented.
3. Vitality of the style.
4. Emotional appeal.

Their reasons for selecting one pamphlet to read first on a snap judgment impression were primarily:

1. Title.
2. Previous familiarity with author.
3. Selection of material in pamphlet.
4. Format—cover, illustrations.

The criteria from four sources were combined in a single classified list. The Combined List of Criteria, stated in full in Chapter VI, includes all the reasons given in the opinion list, the section reactions, the general criticisms, and the snap judgment summary. Each

of the 4,524⁴ reasons found in this study fits under one or another of the topical headings.

The type of response and the way in which it was classified may be demonstrated briefly. The following sample of reader responses is taken from the Combined List of Criteria:

Positive Comments

Negative Comments

A. Content

[illegible]

B. Form

1. Difficulty

9 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000 1001 1002 1003 1004 1005 1006 1007 1008 1009 1010 1011 1012 1013 1014 1015 1016 1017 1018 1019 1020 1021 1022 1023 1024 1025 1026 1027 1028 1029 1030 1031 1032 1033 1034 1035 1036 1037 1038 1039 1040 10

2. Literary quality

a. Organization of material

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Shows unity | (1) Disjointed; incoherent |
| (2) Direct; to the point | (2) Main topic sidetracked |
| (3) Systematic arrangement; good correlation | (3) Lacks organization; uninteresting arrangement |

b. Form and grammar

Simple statement that outline (or other) form is present

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Interesting form | (1) Too much outline (or other) form |
| (2) Sentence structure good | (2) Sentences poor; too long |
| | (3) Poor grammar |

c. Vitality

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) Well worded statement, good style | (1) Poor style; badly written |
| (2) Spicy; colorful; racy; conversational | (2) Shoddy, formal; dead; dry; stereotyped |

The readers were quite conscious of the organization of the pamphlets and made many comments of the type given here. They were less interested in the form and grammar. Vitality was one of the standards most frequently mentioned. Under it were assembled the adjectives describing qualities which are difficult to analyze, but which express those important intangibles that either hold or lose readers.

The detailed list of thirty-eight criteria⁵ was necessary in order to

^a Number of reasons upon which the Combined List is based

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| (a) Opinion | 70 |
| (b) Section reactions | 3,300 |
| (c) General criticisms | 926 |
| (d) Snap judgment | 228 |
| Total | 4,524 |

⁶ See Skeleton List, showing thirty-eight criteria and frequency ranks, Chap. IV, Table V, pp. 82-83.

analyze the data of the experiment and to discover all aspects of the reasons given for liking or disliking the pamphlets. The main topics of that list follow:

- A. Content
 - 1. Historical allusions
 - 2. Presentation of figures
 - 3. Selection and quality of figures
- B. Form
 - 1. Difficulty
 - 2. Literary quality
 - 3. Literary techniques
 - 4. Format
- C. Catching and holding reader interest
 - 1. Introduction
 - 2. Conclusion
 - 3. Techniques for relating problem to reader
 - 4. Emotional appeal
 - 5. Use of famous author's name
- D. Dealing with controversial issues
 - 1. Author's display of his own viewpoint
 - 2. Techniques of controversy

After all of the research evidence concerning the importance of the various standards was accumulated, an abbreviated list was devised which should serve the practical purpose of aiding others in the selection of literature in at least the current problem area. The original Combined List of Criteria was rearranged under functional main topics. Thirteen of the fourteen main criteria in the old form were retained with rewordings. Because of its infrequent mention, the topic *use of famous author*, indicating the influence of a distinguished name upon the reader, was omitted, and *literary techniques* and *literary quality* were divided into four rather than two topics.

This list is presented in a form which could be used with groups without much modification. Preliminary try-out has indicated it to be self-explanatory. Groups with a limited vocabulary might require simplification of the more difficult words, such as graphs, data, clarity, and viewpoint. With such changes taken into account, the classification should produce a well rounded appraisal of controversial literature. The new list of standards is worded as though a magazine article were to be judged. A few changes in terminology should permit the list to be used for pamphlets or books quite as easily as for articles. The list is shown in Table II.

TABLE II
Guide to Criticisms of Magazine Articles

| Title of article | Your name |
|---|-----------|
| In your estimation, what are the chief values and weaknesses of this article? Consider the article carefully in regard to each of the following topics* and state your opinion of it beside each topic. | |
| TOPIC | COMMENT |
| <i>Interesting the reader</i> | |
| Title and appearance ¹ of the article | _____ |
| Clarity and appeal of introduction ² | _____ |
| Methods of making article seem important ³ | _____ |
| Difficulty ⁴ of the material | _____ |
| Literary quality ⁵ | _____ |
| Clarity and interest of material's organization ⁶ | _____ |
| <i>Informing the reader</i> | |
| Quality of explanation ⁷ | _____ |
| Use of examples, stories, comparison ⁸ | _____ |
| Choice and quality of information ⁹ | _____ |
| Presentation of figures, tables, graphs ¹⁰ | _____ |
| Introduction of data from history ¹¹ | _____ |
| <i>Helping the reader to decide</i> | |
| Statement of author's viewpoint ¹² | _____ |
| Methods of presenting arguments and criticisms ¹³ | _____ |
| Appeal to emotions ¹⁴ | _____ |
| Summary and inspiration at conclusion ¹⁵ | _____ |
| Was this article _____ unusually interesting; _____ rather interesting; _____ dull? State your general opinion of the article briefly on the back of this sheet. | |

* Information about each topic is given in Chapter VI at the indicated page. This list should not be used until the references are studied.

¹ Format, p. 188.

² Introduction, p. 190.

³ Catching reader's interest, p. 193.

⁴ Difficulty, p. 172.

⁵ Vitality, rhythm, simplicity, adult approach, pp. 179ff.

⁶ Form, organization, p. 178.

⁷ Expository techniques, p. 182.

⁸ Dramatic, figures of speech, p. 181.

⁹ Subject treated, p. 170.

¹⁰ Figures, p. 167.

¹¹ Historical allusions, p. 166.

¹² Author's viewpoint, p. 196.

¹³ Controversial techniques, p. 198.

¹⁴ Appeal to emotions, p. 194.

¹⁵ Conclusions, p. 191.

Before it is possible to utilize the responses to the guide, the full discussion of each topic in Chapter VI must be consulted. This treatment of criteria gives the complete classification of each topic with detailed information about it.

Analysis of Qualities of Standards by Examining Pamphlets

The listing and interpretation of the criteria⁶ which lead readers to accept or reject material, is a new step in the selection of curricula. Never before to our knowledge has a group of adult readers systematically recorded its impressions of materials in terms that could be reduced to standards. A qualitative picture of each standard is presented by the simple device of classifying all the shades of objection to or approval of the pamphlets under the appropriate heads. For instance, under "Organization of material" (page 41) it may be noted that readers like pamphlets that are unified, direct, and well ordered; they dislike materials that sound disjointed, that are poorly organized, or that digress.

It is not enough to list criteria with descriptive adjectives. The complete picture demands knowledge of the literature to which the adjective refers. One should ask: Which material is disorganized and which is judged to be unified? What makes it so? If the materials that possess different degrees of each standard are examined, the qualities of each criterion will become tangible. This examination was performed in the present study by obtaining qualitative rankings from readers and by an objective analysis of treatment of standards in each pamphlet.

Reader analysis of concrete material is one instrument in answering the above questions concerning the nature of criteria. Ordinarily critics should compare several books in the process of analysis. When an average reader evaluates a single book he is notoriously apt to eulogize it, or at least to make so many favorable comments that his response is valueless. The experimental readers accordingly were asked to compare three pamphlets with one another, ranking them numerically in order of desirability. In order to rank them, it was necessary for the readers to weigh the qualitative factors against one another and to distinguish degrees of interest or of quality in three related books.

Although thirty-eight standards or qualities were discovered, they could not all be analyzed in this study; so a few important qualities were singled out to be observed carefully. The experimental group

⁶ See p. 41 and Chap. VI.

was asked to rate each series of three pamphlets upon six qualities. They ranked each pamphlet 1, 2, or 3 upon attractive appearance, interest of figures, quality of writing, ease of understanding, application of explanation to personal needs, and relation of subject to personal problems.

The group agreed closely upon the order of ranking for the appearance of the pamphlets and agreed to a less extent upon rankings for difficulty and for quality of statistical presentation. The group's rankings of quality of writing, application of explanation to personal needs, and relation of subject to personal problems were little more than random.

As a result of the rankings of the pamphlets upon the quality of appearance, that standard can now be placed upon a scale of reader preference. We know that the readers rated as unattractive two pamphlets with small, poorly arranged type, and one with unusually poor paper. Two of the least liked had cartoons on colored covers. They rated all the pamphlets published by a particular house, pamphlets with heavy paper and twelve point type interrupted by bold face section headings, as average in appearance. Among their first choices two of the three were printed on glossy paper, with a style of type and page that resembled books. The third first choice had large type, several attractive graphs, and a picture. As a result of reader ratings on the topic, "attractiveness of type and page," a scale of qualities was obtained in which glossy paper, average sized type, and illustrations were higher in desirability than cheap paper, small type, and flashy covers.

The readers' rankings of the pamphlets in their order of difficulty were different from the formula of difficulty⁷ which was applied objectively to the pamphlets. The divergence in viewpoint may quite as plausibly mean that the formula is insufficient as that the readers were undiscerning.

Useful as the opinions of the readers were in indicating some of the qualities upon which book selection is based, another sort of approach to the problem was needed. The same qualities of the materials were examined objectively in the laboratory. This provided a check upon readers' judgments and was used to probe into reasons for judgment of which the readers were not fully conscious.

The present study experimented with several different ways of determining the effectiveness of reading matter. There are three illustrations of the quantitative approach to analyzing the nature of

⁷ See p. 46 and Chap. V, p. 131.

books, one of a qualitative approach, and three of descriptive methods. The twelve pamphlets were subjected to analysis of quantity of history, quantity and kinds of figures, vocabulary, quality of style, description of format, techniques of catching and holding reader interest, and author's presentation of controversial issues.

The amount of a quality in the pamphlets was compared with reader preferences to find which amounts were most popular. The general technique was a correlation of, for instance, historical allusions with a preference rating of the pamphlets. A high positive correlation would show that the larger the amount of history, the more popular the pamphlets were apt to be. The instrument used to indicate preference was the Pamphlet Preference Index, compiled from two different ratings of pamphlets.⁸ In the Index the two most popular pamphlets were tied with a rank of 1.5; the least popular pamphlet was ranked 12. Difficulty was determined by finding the proportion of easy and hard words in a sampling of one thousand. The Thorndike Word Book [3]* provided rules for determining difficulty. In order to find the ratio of simple to complex words, a sampling of seventy-five sentences was obtained. The two measures of proportion of words and of sentences were set into the Winnetka formula [4], which indicated the grade placement of each pamphlet. The twelve pamphlets were ranked according to grade placement in an order called the Difficulty Index. It was possible, within the limits of the data at hand, to compare preferences for pamphlets with their ranking from hardest to easiest. Although the rank order correlation⁹ was low,¹⁰ the pamphlets that were average in difficulty were more popular than either the hard or the easy ones.

Next, a scale for the proportion of allusions to history among the total number of pages in pamphlets was established. In each pamphlet the number of lines with historical allusions was counted. (History was defined as "Any reference to data prior to Roosevelt's administration.") The pamphlets were ranked in order from the greatest amount of historical information to the least. The correlation¹¹ between preference for pamphlets and quantity of history indicated that

* Throughout this chapter numbers in brackets refer to bibliographical references to Chapter III, as given on page 68.

⁸ See Chap. IV, pp. 87 f.

⁹ The rank order method of correlation (symbol is rho) is used throughout.

¹⁰ Rho for difficulty was +.09. Full description in Chap. V, pp. 116, 134, and Chap. VI, pp. 172-77.

¹¹ Rho was -.46. For a full description of methods and findings see Chap. V, pp. 119, 134, and Chap. VI, p. 166.

readers tended to prefer those pamphlets with comparatively small numbers of historical allusions. A more detailed investigation is necessary to discover how history may be most effectively introduced into reading material.

The same procedure as that described in the preceding paragraph was followed for a study of the numerical information. The number of pages containing figures or quantitative information was ascertained; and pamphlets were ranked in order from greatest to smallest proportion of pages with figures. The pamphlets with fewer figures were definitely preferred to those possessing more figures.¹² There was another refinement in studying the effect of figures on preference. The preference ratings of all the pamphlet sections containing figures were contrasted with the ratings of sections without figures. The average preference of sections without figures was substantially better than the average with figures.¹³

The attempt to judge pamphlets on their literary quality was unsuccessful in this study.¹⁴ The judges of literary merit were a journalist, a self-styled "author," a librarian, and a modern language teacher. They were asked to determine the quality of the writing, irrespective of content, in each of the twelve pamphlets. A guide list prepared by the judges stated the factors entering into the literary merit of expository material: clarity, apt choice of words, proper grammar, and refreshing presentation of viewpoints. After consideration of these points, the three pamphlets on the topic of unemployment were ranked in order of literary merit. Likewise, the pamphlets on each of the other topics were ranked in their series of three.

The judges' agreement in ranking was little more than random. Conversation with each judge indicated so many logical reasons for errors in ranking that the submission of pamphlets to others to multiply judgments could be presumed to multiply errors. The four judges of literary merit were sure that all of the other factors of difficulty, content, appeal to personal interest, etc., were so strong that they made independent determination of literary merit an impossibility. This opinion was corroborated by the high disagreement among the forty-five experimental readers when they ranked series of pamphlets for literary quality.

¹² Rho was —.59. For a full description of method and findings see Chap. V, pp. 120-22, and Chap. VI, pp. 167-69.

¹³ See Chap. V, p. 135.

¹⁴ See Chap. V, p. 126.

The difficulty of determining literary merit by vote indicates the obstacles in the path of those who wish to make any other qualitative judgments of criteria. It is comparatively easy to prepare scales which indicate varying *quantities* of criteria. But quality and individual values are so closely interwoven that it will not often be possible to erect for any given criterion *qualitative* scales which are unrelated to specific materials and groups.

There are many topics for which no quantitative scale can be erected, for which qualitative scales are invalid, but upon which it is desirable to have as much information as possible. For instance, one of the prime factors determining readability of material is the way in which the author catches the reader's interest. The basic method of catching interest is to show the material's relation to the life of the reader and to stimulate the reader to broaden his knowledge. It is foolish to count the number of times the reader is addressed personally, or to attempt to reduce as variable a factor as "human interest" to a good, bad, or indifferent category. But no study of material would be complete which did not show what methods the author used in attempting to reach his reader.

The simple technique of asking several workers to list the methods used by authors in injecting "human interest" into their pamphlets was utilized in the study. Since the subject matter is probably the single greatest cause of interest, the content of each booklet was described in a paragraph. The assistants then listed "the techniques used by the author to catch and to hold reader interest." No correlation between preference and techniques of catching reader interest could be made. It is interesting to note, however, the techniques which were used by the most popular and the least popular authors.¹⁵

A method of description similar to the above was used in analysing the format of pamphlets. Each was described with reference to paper, type, cover, pictures, kinds of sections, and size.¹⁶

In determining the bias of authors, the descriptive technique was condensed into classifications permitting easy comparison. Four judges assigned the method of presenting controversial issues in each pamphlet to one of four described classifications. The judges were more consistent in this than in their rating of literary merit. The same classification was assigned to a third of the pamphlets by all

¹⁵ See contrast of two pamphlets, Chap. V, pp. 142-55 and List of techniques, Chap. VI, p. 193.

¹⁶ See Chap. V, p. 125 and Chap. VI, pp. 184-89.

four judges; they differed by only one classification interval upon another third of the pamphlets.¹⁷

Several methods for studying criteria in relation to materials have been discussed and illustrated. The illustrations are inadequate. A multitude of studies of a similar type would be necessary to determine all the ways in which material may be presented. Investigations of the general nature discussed here may be undertaken by field workers in the usual course of selection of curriculum materials. More efficient methods are possible in the laboratory than in field work. There material is scientifically controlled; the criterion under observation is the chief variable. Several examples of such studies are presented in Chapter VI under the respective topical headings.¹⁸ Such experiments are not, however, always as valid as are the more lifelike analyses in which typical readers respond in various ways to their usual reading matter. The problem of determining the criteria that signify readability will best be solved when it is approached from the laboratory and from the field simultaneously.

Analysis of Standards by Inspecting Group Criticisms

Seven qualities of the experimental booklets have just been explored as objectively as possible. Certain facts about the group that read the booklets should be analyzed. Then the group's opinions about the material with known characteristics should be interpreted in light of the knowledge about the group. When data about the group, the pamphlets, and the group's opinions are collected and coordinated, it will be possible to state with some certainty the standards that the group used in judging the pamphlets.

The first essential in studying a group is the collection of all of the information about it which might be relevant to the problem. A survey of the literature of experiments upon interests in reading suggested that the following factors are probably related to tastes: sex, marital status, occupation, age, education, and participation in adult education activities. This study sought information about these items, but included other items which were related to the problem of influences upon attitudes toward controversial issues. These possible influences were: religious affiliation, political alignment, education in social sciences, and reading in magazines, newspapers, books, and pamphlets.

¹⁷ See Chap. V, Table XV, p. 124.

¹⁸ For examples of experiments under controlled conditions see Chap. VI, pp. 168, 172, 173, 175, 176, 181, 184.

A questionnaire¹⁹ containing those items, when filled in by members of the experimental group, gave a rough picture of the abilities, achievements, and pertinent interests of the group. The questionnaire aided in interpreting confusing data.

One way of using the information about the group may be related briefly. It was soon apparent, as the data about the readers' interest in the pamphlets were analyzed, that readers disagreed on their preferences. Reasons for the disagreement were sought in the nature of the readers. Sub-groups which were alike in some respect were contrasted with sub-groups opposite to them to see if the two disagreed more strongly than the group at large. These sub-groups were determined by examining the information about each person on the questionnaire.

Several sub-groups were contrasted.²⁰ Among them were groups differing in sex and groups differing in education. The ratings for pamphlet preference made by all the men were averaged. These ratings were compared with the average preference ratings of all the women. The men agreed very closely with the women in their pamphlet preferences. In the same way, the preferences of a sub-group of eight people who had been to college for two years or less were compared with the preferences of eight people who possessed postgraduate degrees. These two sub-groups disagreed widely upon fully half of the twelve pamphlets, approaching agreement upon only two of them. The difference in sex did not appear to affect the preferences for pamphlets; but there were grounds for supposing that variations in education might have produced some of the differences of opinion found in the group at large.²¹

This example shows how differences in preferences for pamphlets may be occasioned by the nature of the readers. Differences may also be induced by factors within the pamphlets. Two illustrations will suffice to show, first, how the group's variation in preference for pamphlets may aid in finding out what *quantity* of a particular standard they find most interesting, and second, how their preference may indicate the most popular *quality* of a standard. The preferred quantity of figures will be explored first.

A preliminary step was the formulation of a measurement of preference for the pamphlets. The experimental group read twelve pamphlets and indicated their interest in three different ways, as men-

¹⁹ See Appendix II D.

²⁰ See Chap. IV, pp. 95-102.

²¹ See Chap. V, pp. 137-42.

tioned above. They rated each section on a five point scale from "very interesting" to "dull"; they gave a general estimate upon whether the pamphlet was "very interesting," "interesting," or "dull"; and they compared three pamphlets on the same subject with one another, ranking them in order of interest. The average of readers' general ratings of every pamphlet was combined in one figure with their ratings of all the sections in the pamphlet. These average figures for every pamphlet, which were obtained from the group's general and section ratings, were ranked with 1 signifying the best liked pamphlet and 12 the least popular. When two pamphlet averages fell at the same place on the scale, they were rated at a half-way point; for instance, D²² and G in Table II both ranked at 1.5. The resulting scale is called the Pamphlet Preference Index.²³

The quantity of figures in each pamphlet, expressed in percentage, was found by dividing the number of pages containing figures by the number of pages in the pamphlet. The percentages in the pamphlets were ranked from 1 to 12, with 1 representing the pamphlet with the highest proportion of figures.²⁴ Table III shows how the rank order for proportion of figures was derived and gives the rank order of preference for the pamphlets for comparison.

The interpretation of this table is best made through an average. It would be stretching the law of cause and effect to say that the quantity of figures in the two most popular pamphlets, D and G, was therefore the proper quantity to provide in all writing. There are more causes for the popularity of those two pamphlets than the figures in them. But a careful examination of the last two columns of the table will show that the better liked pamphlets, ranking from 1 to 6 in the Preference Index, almost always have the least figures, ranking from 7 to 11.5 on the scale of quantity of figures. In addition, there is only one pamphlet among the half that are less liked which has few figures.

Column 1 shows that the pamphlets ranking from 1 to 6 in quantity of figures have figures on from 95% to 50% of their pages, whereas the pamphlets ranking from 7 to 11.5 have from 44% to 0% of figures. Therefore the comparison between preference and quantity of figures indicates that by and large the pamphlets which were more popular with this group had figures on 44% or less of their pages. This generalization is not invariably correct; a most

²² Each pamphlet is represented by a letter. The key is given in Chap. IV, p. 75.

²³ See Chap. IV, p. 88 and Appendix III A.

²⁴ See Chap. V, Table XIV, p. 122.

TABLE III

Comparison of the Quantity of Figures in Pamphlets with Readers' Preferences for the Pamphlets*

| Pamphlet | Per Cent Pages with Figures (1) | Per Cent Figures Rank (2) | Pamphlet Preference Index† (3) |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Unemployment | | | |
| B† | 86 | 3 | 9 |
| C | 42 | 8 | 3.5 |
| D | 60 | 5 | 1.5 |
| War and Peace | | | |
| E | 84 | 4 | 11 |
| F | 00 | 11.5 | 5 |
| G | 30 | 9 | 1.5 |
| Government | | | |
| H | 00 | 11.5 | 8 |
| I | 50 | 6 | 6 |
| K | 44 | 7 | 7 |
| Unstable Money | | | |
| O | 95 | 1 | 12 |
| P | 21 | 10 | 3.5 |
| Q | 89 | 2 | 10 |

* Correlation between figures and preference is $-.59$. † The Index is based on the preference average of 45 readers. ‡ Each letter represents a pamphlet.

(1) Determined by dividing number of pages with figures by total number of pages in pamphlet.

(2) Pamphlet with most figures ranks 1.

(3) Most popular pamphlet ranks 1. For derivation of Index, see Chap. IV, Table VI and Appendix III A.

popular pamphlet, D, had figures on 60% of its pages, and one of the less popular, H, had no figures. But it may be safely asserted that on the average the proper quantity of figures in reading material should be less than 50% in order to satisfy the reader preference of the group in this study.

The preceding discussion illustrated a method of finding the group's standard of judgment by comparing its preference for pamphlets with knowledge about the quantity of a topic present in those pamphlets. Although the same general method is used, the details are different when the quality of topics is compared with preferences. Readers' attitudes toward the kind of bias expressed by authors in the pamphlets will demonstrate the qualitative method.

TABLE IV
Comparison of Methods of Presenting Issues with Group Preference
for Pamphlets

| Pamphlet | Pamphlet Preference Index* | Type of Bias† | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| | | 1 Impartial | 2 Fair Partisan | 3 Salesman | 4 Prejudiced Partisan |
| Unemployment | | | | | |
| B | 9 | x | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| C | 3.5 | x | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| D | 1.5 | . . . | x | . . . | . . . |
| Peace | | | | | |
| E | 11 | . . . | . . . | x | . . . |
| F | 5 | . . . | . . . | . . . | x |
| G | 1.5 | . . . | . . . | . . . | x |
| Government | | | | | |
| H | 8 | . . . | x | . . . | . . . |
| I | 6 | x | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| K | 7 | . . . | . . . | . . . | x |
| Money | | | | | |
| O | 12 | x | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| P | 3.5 | . . . | x | . . . | . . . |
| Q | 10 | . . . | . . . | x | . . . |

x Shows the consensus of 4 judges' opinion on the proper position of the pamphlet.

* The ranks vary from 1 to 12 on a scale of popularity. 1 is most popular, 12 is least popular. The Pamphlet Preference Index is based on the opinions of 45 readers.

† The types of bias are stated in text above.

Four ways in which an author may express or may attempt to conceal his viewpoint toward his subject were distinguished by the writer and two assistants. These four types of bias were:

- Position 1. Author presents equal facts and arguments on all sides of the issue. (Impartial)
- Position 2. Author gives the facts on all sides, but shows why he favors one side. (Fair partisan)
- Position 3. Author presents own views in best light, without indicating alternatives. (Salesman)
- Position 4. Author presents other sides only to show their defects, and good points of own views. (Prejudiced partisan)

Three assistants read each pamphlet carefully and assigned it to the one of the four positions that best described the author's method

of presenting a controversial subject. In case the assistants did not agree, the writer was the final judge of the position of the pamphlet. The position to which each was assigned is shown in Table IV. More pamphlets were assigned to the "impartial" position than to any other, while only two were considered to be "salesmen" of their particular viewpoints.

It is necessary in studying pamphlets' bias, as it was in studying their quantity of figures, to compare the preferences among a block of pamphlets rather than for isolated ones. In this instance the average preference for each type of bias is most instructive. The greatest contrast is between preferences for pamphlets in types 3 and 4. The two pamphlets in type 3 were not popular, ranking 9 and 10 on the Pamphlet Preference Index. Each of the three in type 4 ranked in the upper half in popularity. The readers liked the pamphlets classified as "prejudiced partisan" very much more than those called "salesman." Furthermore, only one of four pamphlets in type 1 was ranked among the first six in preference, whereas two of the three assigned to type 2 were ranked in the upper half.

There are so few pamphlets spread over so many types of bias that it is impossible to consider the results of the examination of bias as reliable. It appeared that the readers in the Civil Works Administration group liked most of the pamphlets which employed stirring arguments, either fair or unfair, in showing their partisanship better than they did the pamphlets which were calmly impartial or which showed one point of view without admitting opposition.

Before proceeding to the other considerations of Chapter III, the steps in evaluating books which have been illustrated by this study should be summarized. The steps to be followed are stated in the first sentence of each of the following three paragraphs. The methods which were found by this study to be most practicable in fulfilling the steps are given in the remainder of each paragraph.

It is first necessary to secure a guide to criticism which will include all the standards ordinarily erected by readers of literature. Such a list was prepared by examining experimental and general studies and by asking a group of readers to evaluate material and write their criticisms. Several thousand reasons thus obtained were assembled in a list of thirty-eight criteria. The list was later condensed into fifteen criteria, which may be sufficient for the use of others who wish to provide guides to the criticism of controversial literature.

Next, the reading materials must be studied from several significant angles, in order to discover qualities which cause readers to

like or dislike them. The characteristics of the experimental pamphlets which were analyzed in order to illustrate these methods were: difficulty of words and sentences, quantity and form of figures, quantity of history, literary merit, techniques for reaching reader interest, format, and method of presenting controversial issues. The quantity, the degree, or the type of each quality present in each pamphlet was ascertained. Wherever possible, the pamphlets were ranked in order upon the degree of the quality that they possessed.

Then the tastes of the study group are subjected to careful analysis. A general picture of the experimental group was obtained from a questionnaire. The members ranked pamphlets for preference which revealed their average tastes. They rated the material for quality of explanations, difficulty, appearance, and several other factors. When the preferences of the group as a whole had been studied, the tastes of members of the group with different backgrounds were examined.

If an adult leader uses this technique in selecting reading material, he will have an indication of the best book or pamphlet to be used during a study course. On the basis of the present analysis, one pamphlet on each of the four topics could be recommended for the Civil Works Administration group, or a similar one. The selected pamphlet in each series might be the one that ranked most popular. Or it might be the one that excited the least clash of opinions, frequently ranking second in its series. The rankings indicated by the group would solve the immediate problem of selecting a book for its purposes.

Of more lasting importance than the selection of one book for a course is the information acquired about the kinds of books which are accepted and rejected by a group and reasons therefor. These may be phrased in terms of general standards used by the group in judging books. Some of the generalizations drawn from an analysis of the experimental group will be stated in the following section.

RULES FOR SELECTING MATERIAL DERIVED FROM THE STUDY OF ONE GROUP

We have maintained that each careful analysis of readers' attitudes toward materials makes the next selection and evaluation of materials easier. While rules for selecting materials which are established in one instance may not prove indicative in all cases, the fact that they were applied on one occasion makes it more probable that they will be applied at other times. Such rules provide a point of

departure for the formulation of other rules; every new formulation moves the point of departure closer along the road to the attainment of adequate standards for selecting curriculum materials for adult groups. In this spirit, the generalizations which may be advanced from the study of a Civil Works Administration group that read twelve pamphlets on controversial problems are stated.

Readers' opinions of books provide the standards for selecting them. No abstractly determined standards are valid unless they coincide with the thinking of readers. Therefore, the opinions which were most frequently mentioned in evaluating these pamphlets are of more than ordinary importance in selecting books. The readers in the experiment stated the following factors to be essential qualities of reading materials:²⁵

Material should be simple,

But should not imply that readers are less intelligent than the author.

An author should seek ways of relating his subject to the daily life and the vital problems of the reader.

Readers are anxious to possess facts,

Facts which are explained simply,

Featuring statistics as clearly presented and as easily interpreted as possible.

Readers are impatient with wordiness;

Yet they demand that difficult ideas be expressed fully.

They are adversely critical of authors whose pleas are based on emotion.

But they like to have emotional and dramatic touches added to expository statements.

The study discovered that widely divergent sub-groups frequently attached the same importance to standards in judging the same materials. Difficulty of subject matter, methods of explaining data, and methods of presenting facts were important considerations for Ph.D. candidates and for non-graduates of college, for men and for women, for students trained in the subject matter of the books and for students not so trained.²⁶ The differentiation lay in the widely divergent degrees of each quality demanded by various groups. For example, advanced readers were impatient with the illustrations

²⁵ Derived from analyses in Chap. VI, and from importance ranking in Chap. IV, Table V.

²⁶ Comparison of the importance of standards according to the judgment of six sub-groups, see Chap. IV, pp. 95-102.

necessary in explaining a subject to beginners. Advanced students labeled material "too elementary" which high school graduates described as "not clear." Nevertheless, manner of explanation and difficulty of subject matter were mentioned as influential factors, either positively or negatively, by both groups.

Several qualities of the pamphlets were subjected to a scrutiny that revealed some pertinent generalizations for the standards of the experimental group. Since a small number of pamphlets was subjected to a comparatively large number of tests, it is not possible to maintain with certainty whether statistics, history, difficulty, bias, or other factors were influential in forming readers' opinions of interest. Alternative interpretations, together with experimentation to discover which interpretation is more plausible, are given in other portions of the book indicated by cross references. The following generalizations are an attempt to cut through the qualifications and to present the findings in a light that seems justified by the data.

*Historical Allusions*²⁷

While every pamphlet contained some history, the proportion was not great in any of them. The readers tended to like those pamphlets with less historical information, although one with a large amount was popular. It is possible for well presented treatments of history in a discussion of current affairs to arouse the interest of the experimental readers, although material with less historical data is ordinarily more interesting to them.

Presentation of Figures

The pamphlets which contained figures ranked on a scale from 0 to 95 per cent.²⁸ There was a more intense dislike of figures than of historical allusions. This fact was shown not only by a comparison of ranks for preference and for figures,²⁹ but by a comparison of all the pamphlet sections with and without figures.³⁰ Notwithstanding the general trend, one of the most popular pamphlets contained a large number of figures and some tables.³¹

Analysis of the most and least popular sections of pamphlets showed that figures were more successful if their significance were indicated than if the reader had to interpret them unaided.³²

²⁷ See Chap. V, p. 134.

²⁸ See Chap. V, p. 122.

²⁹ See Chap. V, p. 133.

³⁰ See Chap. V, p. 135.

³¹ See Chap. V, p. 135.

³² See Chap. V, pp. 155-58.

Difficulty

The Winnetka formula for determining difficulty, which is a device used by the public schools, placed the easiest pamphlet on the fifth grade level and the hardest pamphlet on the tenth grade level.³³ Although a correlation between preference for pamphlets and their difficulty was negligible,³⁴ closer analysis showed that the pamphlets that were average in difficulty were more popular than those that were either hard or easy.³⁵

Readers seemed to have in mind a definition of difficulty that the formula did not include, for they ranked only half of the pamphlets in the same order of difficulty as the formula.³⁶ On the basis of the difficulty ranking made by readers, the sub-group that had gone to college two years or less preferred the four easiest pamphlets, while the group with postgraduate degrees liked the most difficult pamphlets.³⁷

Dramatic versus Expository Techniques

In spite of the fact that the term "dramatic techniques" had a wide definition, including examples and comparisons as well as the usual employment of stories, it was of much less importance in the minds of the readers than were good expository techniques. One of the experimental readers' primary requirements was that information be clearly and simply explained, with reasons given to substantiate arguments.³⁸

Techniques of Controversy

The method which is generally advocated in dealing with issues, a sound and impartial survey of all viewpoints, was not in favor with the experimental group. This group preferred those pamphlets which were strongly prejudiced in favor of one viewpoint, which erected arguments of others merely to refute them. The group opposed those pamphlets which argued subtly for one view without presenting any alternatives.³⁹

³³ See Chap. V, Table XII, p. 117.

³⁴ See Chap. V, Table XX, p. 133.

³⁵ See Chap. V, p. 134.

³⁶ See Chap. V, Table XIX, p. 131.

³⁷ See Chap. V, p. 138.

³⁸ See Chap. VI, p. 182.

³⁹ See Chap. V, p. 136.

Title of Pamphlet

The title was by far the strongest reason for preliminary selection of books to read.⁴⁰

These few conclusions may be negated by future studies. They are presented with the hope of stimulating critics to follow investigations of their own. Some methods which are a practical outcome of the experiment will be presented next.

APPLICATION OF METHODS FOR SELECTING READING MATERIAL

The methods which were followed in this experiment in obtaining evidence about reader standards of judging literature may be adapted to various requirements. The people who can profitably use these procedures are a group leader or program chairman in a community, a curriculum director of a national organization, a publisher who is interested in providing material suited to particular kinds of groups, and a writer of study books. The process of selecting materials herein advocated can best be illustrated by considering the work of a program chairman in a community adult education institute. Modifications will be suggested for other uses.

Application of Method by a Local Program Chairman

The person in charge of curriculum selection must possess patience, ingenuity, and flexibility. He must realize that the selection of appropriate materials is a dynamic and progressive process and will never be completely reduced to formula or routine. He should not expect to solve his problem of establishing generalizations at the first trial but should search systematically for means of improving the selective process.

Specifically, the program chairman should become as well acquainted as he can with the group for whom material is chosen. He should note particularly the prejudices which would make selection of materials written in one vein dangerous, in another acceptable. Many other cues to his selection would be evident, such as the concepts that the group does not comprehend, or the background of occupational and cultural experience that it possesses. Such information will help to show the broad subjects that should be studied and the outer limits of style and complexity that the group would enjoy.

The general information concerning the group can be obtained from those who are familiar with it. Those who know the members best

⁴⁰ See Chap. VI, p. 187.

will find, however, that even they lack specific knowledge of value in choosing between several topics or types of material. At this point the cooperation of an adult class should be obtained for the purpose of studying materials and providing a basis for establishing criteria. This study may be profitably carried on by asking a leader to convert his class in an introductory course into an experimental unit.

The first term in which an introductory course becomes the subject of an experiment may be devoted to appraising books or other reading materials as a part of the class procedure. Several committees of members, picked without respect to their literary judgment, may each select one piece of reading from among several. These committees should be given guides for criticism and should be asked to determine, not whether the selection would suit the class—a hard question to answer—but whether it appeals to them individually.

The books selected by committees should be given to the whole class to study during the course. Any comments upon the presentation of material, as well as the type of responses that the books produce—whether emotional or reasoned, whether quiescent or active—may be recorded by the leader. At the end of the course all readers should state or write their opinions of the books. In addition to making comments on each book separately, they should compare books with one another, ranking them for preference and upon other points of judgment.

The leader and program director will have three tasks, if they use the results of their experiment to best advantage. First, they should analyze the books studied during the course to discover the method of securing reader interest, the amount and treatment of statistical data, the difficulty, the type and detail of explanations, etc. Second, they should scrutinize the readers' opinions to observe the reasons given for liking or not liking the treatment of statistics, the attitudes toward devices for catching interest, the quality of explanation, and so on. Third, they should record important information about the class, so that future classes could be compared with this one. If other groups are like the experimental group in essential respects, they may be expected to like the same type of material; if they have essential differences, they would probably prefer other material.

When information from the preceding three analyses is assembled, standards may be derived. All of the information about the class's opinion of the experimental material should reveal the qualities that they expect in any material of the same nature. These expected quali-

ties should be formulated in as definite rules as the data warrant, indicating those rules that are reasonably reliable and those that are purely tentative.

An experiment of the type just suggested would have several results. One contribution would be the formulation of methods for a routine criticism of all materials as classes used them. The immediate value of the experiment should be the provision of valuable standards for selecting other material for the same introductory course. In addition, the standards which were erected by the first class as it studied an introductory course may become the starting point for analysis of criteria in other courses, either advanced ones in the same field or courses in other subjects. If the original experimental class is taking an advanced course, it will judge its books by many of the standards used before. Some of its standards will have changed: there will have been some growth in attitudes and concepts, and it will demand different topics. The leader of this group should analyze the standards utilized by the advanced class, indicating which have remained constant and which have changed. In the same way, the program director may request all leaders to compare the standards used by their classes with those of the experimental group.

As each new field is entered by the educational organization, or as courses on a new level of difficulty are approached, a detailed procedure to establish proper material for study groups is needed. The list of important criteria will be modified as books in other areas than the experimental one are analyzed. An intensive educational campaign may change some of the requirements placed by readers upon materials. The shifting political scene may bring new problems and stir up a new type of interest in their solution. In spite of changing demands by the readers, the task should become increasingly easier if general rules of selection are frequently amended to fit changing groups, books, and interests.

When a program chairman has conscientiously analyzed standards for several years, he should have a file showing the qualities which groups with different backgrounds, at different levels of study, demand in the various most frequently studied courses.

Methods of a National Curriculum Director

The position of a curriculum director at the national headquarters of an organization is in some ways less fortunate and in other ways more fortunate than that of a local director. It is more difficult for him to guess the character of his public, for he does not have the personal acquaintance with it that a local leader does. He has a much

wider audience, however, and a more varied setting for experimentation. Since he may submit the same material to a large number of groups, he should be able to establish rules of selection more rapidly than a person whose material is used by relatively few students.

The national curriculum director should enlist the active cooperation of a few leaders who are willing to interest their classes in a careful evaluation of material that has been prepared or recommended. In addition, guide sheets with a list of points on which material is to be criticized should accompany every study manual that is sent to groups throughout the country. Leaders should be asked to obtain an evaluation of the material from the members and to return it to headquarters. Every sheet of criticism should have attached to it a brief questionnaire which is designed to obtain relevant facts about the person making the criticism. This is essential if the director is to become acquainted with the members.

When the brief questionnaires from all readers and the detailed criticisms from selected groups are returned, the curriculum director should perform the same kind of analysis that was recommended for local leaders. He should secure all of the information about the curriculum material that was obtained in the present study and other information besides. He should analyze opinions thoroughly, classifying each analysis according to various facts known about the person that made the criticism. Then the classifications should be tabulated according to ages, occupations, education, or other divisions which the investigator found to be influential among his clientele.

This analysis will indicate needs for differentiating material for different types of people and will show, more adequately than hearsay or intuition, the standards of judgment used by the members. This process should lead to preparation or selection of better material in succeeding years.

Application of Method by a Publisher

The business of publishers is to supply readers with books that they want to read. They spend money and energy in attempting to gauge public tastes. Possibly a file of the kind of information suggested here might provide a more reliable index to tastes than any less thorough methods that they have worked out.

A recent advertisement shows how one publishing house is seeking to analyze reader tastes [1, p. 18]. This illustrates a method that might be used in securing reader opinions. The publishers enclosed a post card in every copy of Walter Duranty's *I Write as I Please*, a staff correspondent's book about Russia. This post card asked for

a written answer to the question: "We would like to know whether this book lived up to your expectations. If so, why? If not, why not?" The only information that was requested about the individual who answered the card was his name and address. They claimed that hundreds of cards were returned. Four responses were printed in the advertisement.

The use which this particular publishing house made of the cards is not known. If they are to be used as guides to giving the public more books that they like, then the responses which were received should be classified to show the various standards employed by the readers in judging the book. Specific criticisms should be especially welcomed, and should be checked against the qualities of the book that aroused them. When the publishing house considers other books which might be presumed to interest the same audience, it would appraise the books in the light of the standards which the readers expressed earlier.

The method of obtaining criticisms which was described in the advertisement might be improved in two respects. Two or three challenging questions which would insure more specific criticisms might have supplanted the single question. And provision for obtaining a few significant facts about the readers would have added greatly to the value of the returns.

If publishers could frequently ask readers why they did or did not like a book, assuring the correspondent that the request was made in order to give him many better books rather than to advertise a single book, they would undoubtedly obtain enough intelligent responses to establish more adequate standards for selecting books than they have at present.

Application of Method by a Writer

A writer may utilize some of the methods for becoming acquainted with readers suggested in this study as profitably as any other professional worker. If he knows the audience for whom he writes and applies his knowledge effectively to subject matter with which he is thoroughly familiar, the curriculum director and publisher will find their task of selection easy when they examine his manuscript.

Most of the suggestions that can be made to writers of expository material are incorporated in the discussion of the thirty-eight criteria around which readers grouped their criticisms of material.⁴¹ Writers should become familiar with the comments upon each standard, with all that has been found out about them experimentally, and with the

⁴¹ See Chap. VI.

relative importance that they have had for readers. The list of rules which are derived from opinions found under the most important standards, given on page 56 of this chapter, offers especial help.

A wide knowledge of the standards that might be derived from studies like the present one would provide a good basis for suiting material to readers. But that knowledge is not enough. While it should be sufficiently mastered by the writer to allow him to comply with the general requirements of potential readers, it should not be permitted to hamper his expression. Several writers who attempted to work with a sheet set before them which contained rules for securing "readability" requested after a few days that they be permitted freedom during writing and that their product be adapted later to comply with the rules. Standards are valuable, but they are only a partial guide to writing.

There is no better way for authors who are still learning the tastes of their clientele to observe the material's shortcomings and values than to present manuscripts to typical people and groups. They should record criticisms and derive generalizations from the readers' evaluations. The procedures of some authors who sought to know their readers are described in the following illustration.

Several economists were asked to prepare pamphlets for the boys in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps. Before writing, they spent some time in the camps, talking to and playing with the boys and asking leaders and educational directors about them. If they had followed the techniques suggested in this study, they might have given the boys printed pamphlets to read and discuss, obtaining their specific responses to printed material that was similar to the type which the writers were planning to prepare. If, after knowing the boys so well, they could have formed a number of groups that would have been willing to read and criticize the manuscripts as they were written, the resultant pamphlets should have been suited to the needs and interests of Civilian Conservation Corps boys. Unfortunately, the project of writing the pamphlets for those particular patrons was halted before completion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There are many opportunities for investigating reading materials for adults. Only a beginning in gathering knowledge about a few standards has been made. Other problems will be suggested. First, however, a caution about research procedure will be extended.

Some of the problems presented here can best be solved by labora-

tory workers, others by group leaders. Many of them can be investigated by either type: the best plan is frequently that of collaboration of research expert and field worker. A warning should be given to the research technician working alone. He must not experiment so carefully with one phase of a problem that important conditioning factors are eliminated.⁴² One reason for the infertility of some laboratory products is that the problems studied have little relation to actual reading situations. The adult educator is probably in no danger of failing to note the whole situation, but he needs a warning from the opposite angle. Unnecessary and irrelevant complications should be excluded from test situations, even at the expense of losing a modicum of their naturalness. The mastery of some of the basic principles of investigation will save much difficulty when the time comes to assimilate and to interpret results.

* Some problems for further research in the field of selecting reading matter for study groups are:

1. The discovery of criteria for fields of reading other than the current problems area. What is the relationship between lists of criteria obtained from analyzing the comments of a Civil Works Administration group about current problem literature and lists obtained from other groups who read other non-fiction materials?

2. The analysis of causes for interest in different types of popular literature: tabloid newspapers, movie magazines, and best sellers among books. Could any of the sources of interest utilized by popular literature be adapted to other purposes? What principles used in advertising might be adopted in exposition?

3. Collection of and experimentation with techniques for increasing and improving the reading habits of members of groups.

4. Further testing of the finding here that the group's judgment of a book before reading it generally agreed with its preference after reading the book. Are prejudgments about books usually reliable for groups? For individuals? Could the selection of study material by a group after brief examination of a number of alternatives be substituted for the slower method of analysis suggested herein?

5. Erection of more adequate standards for various criteria in the contemporary problems area:

- a. *Historical allusions.* The conclusion of this study, that historical allusions have some influence upon reading interests, needs further validation and amplification. Do most readers have a prejudice against inclusion of historical data in the discussion of current

⁴² An illustration of such a study is given in Chap. VI, p. 168.

questions? With what presentation is history interesting to people: in narrative form, as recital of incidents, as mere allusion to episodes, or as illustrating or otherwise relating to present-day problems?

b. *Presentation of figures.* The presence of statistics frequently prejudices readers against factual articles. How can such articles be presented more pleasingly and meaningfully? Which types of graphs, charts, and tables are best understood by lay readers? How may the average person be taught more effectively to interpret printed figures?

c. *Selection of information.* The exclusion or inclusion of information was found to be an important determinant of readers' preference. Do readers prefer material that is largely familiar to them? How much new information do the following classes of readers want: those who possess no background in the field, those who are fairly familiar with the field, or those who are experts? If a specific group is studied, what are the relations among its ability, its previous information upon the topic, and the amount of new information that it can master in one reading?

d. *Difficulty.* Although William S. Gray is conducting extended researches in the field of difficulty, he is preoccupied with the mechanics of construction, and some of the subtler causes for difficulty remain to be discovered. With a given background and ability, how few definitions and verbal illustrations does a person need in order to learn a new idea? How many ideas can be crowded into a paragraph without confusing the readers? What are the best forms for definitions of words and statements of problems?

e. *Colloquial style.* The advantages and disadvantages of writing in the language of the reader for whom material is intended need more impartial consideration than they have yet had. Humorists have gained wide fame through talking in colloquial language; what would be the effect of wider use of their style in popular discussions of serious questions?

f. *Dramatic versus expository techniques.* The evidence of this study suggests that dramatic techniques have been overrated as methods of interpreting facts. How do the dramatic and expository styles compare (1) when the reader has no previous interest in a subject, (2) when the interest is mild, or (3) when the reader is anxious to acquire information? How does the nature of the reader and how does the content of the material influence reader attitudes toward dramatic or expository methods?

g. *Illustrations.* Much more attention should be paid to the instructional value of photographs and cartoons in non-fiction material.

What is the difference between the quality of learning through un-illustrated context and through context which employs pictures?⁴⁸

h. *Introduction and conclusion.* An introduction has the power of orienting readers favorably or unfavorably toward a book. A conclusion determines to some extent the impression left by a book. What constitutes successful introductions and conclusions? Do people want their attention arrested by stories, or do they want concise facts at beginning and end? What influence does familiarity with a topic have on the required nature of an introduction? What is the influence of the length of the article or book on the type of conclusion necessary to satisfy the reader?

i. *Techniques for catching the reader's attention.* Although almost any study of readability involves some analysis of techniques for interesting readers, there is need of direct attention to the problem. What methods of relating problems to readers' interests are used in successful and in unsuccessful writing? Are there variations in the methods preferred by different readers, or by the same person when reading about different subjects?

j. *Prejudice.* Sociological methods should be employed to discover the wide influence of the reader's or the author's prejudices upon readability. Under what conditions do readers like material which is opposed to their beliefs? Can a calm author persuade readers to consider ideas that are distasteful to them? Does an emotional author induce emotion in readers? What is most successful: a strictly impartial presentation, one in which the author is fair but partisan, or one in which the author is so partisan that he admits no advantages in other views?

SUMMARY

This study formulated three steps in procuring adequate bases for standards to be used in selecting an adult education curriculum. First, the qualities that readers criticize in books were discovered by classifying all of the experimental readers' opinions of pamphlets under the heads of thirty-eight qualities. Then a few of these qualities were selected to ascertain their form in the experimental pamphlets. Third, the scales of qualities resulting from the preceding analysis were compared with a readers' scale of preference for the pamphlets. This comparison showed the qualities that readers liked best in the pamphlets.

⁴⁸ The magazine, *Building America*, is using illustrations as a basic method of teaching. [2]

The information provided by these three kinds of investigation was organized to show the standards that the experimental readers used when they evaluated the pamphlets, and therefore the standards that they could be presumed to use in selecting any material of the same general nature. The standards were stated in terms of the amount or the characteristics of each quality in the pamphlets.

The purpose of this study was twofold. In addition to accumulating information about standards to use in selecting books, methods that could be utilized in selecting or evaluating books were evolved. A local program chairman was advised to discover the standards applied to their reading by groups under his control through a three-step analysis of the sort used in this study. A national program director was expected to apply a similar method of accumulating criticisms from readers throughout the country to the material that was prepared under his direction. Publishers, too, could profit through the criticisms of their books by readers if they could find a method of obtaining a representative cross-sampling of opinion. Finally, authors should submit their manuscripts to groups representative of potential readers in order to shape the writing to the requirements of those readers.

Enough information about the various standards for selecting books was acquired here to make the possibility of fruitful exploration and the need of far more research in the field self-evident. More than a dozen research problems in the same area as this study were mentioned.

Chapter III has touched upon most of the content of Part II. Part II contains a more elaborate report of the investigation, stating in detail the methods used, the difficulties encountered, and the composition of data from which the few findings were drawn. In Chapter VI the threads of the discussion are brought together to show all that was discovered about each of the standards used by readers in judging pamphlets upon current controversial issues.

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PART II

AN EXPERIMENT TO DISCOVER ADULT
READING STANDARDS

ADDRESSED TO TECHNICIANS IN PARTICULAR

CHAPTER IV

TECHNIQUES OF THE INVESTIGATION

THE detailed considerations of performing an experiment form the main part of this chapter. The understanding of such procedures as classification of standards and methods of studying responses within the sub-groups, described in this chapter, is essential to an intelligent assimilation of the discussions of Chapters V and VI.

COLLECTION OF A LIST OF STANDARDS

The first procedure was assembling a working list of standards of judging literature. There were four sources for these standards: first, the opinions of experts, and second, third, and fourth, criticisms by readers of pamphlets in the form of general criticisms, section reactions, and pre-judgments of books. A Combined List of Criteria was derived from the four sources.

The Opinions of Experts

In an effort to collect available opinions upon standards for selecting reading material for adults, the books published before the date of the investigation¹ which deal with adult curriculum, with the general literature of adult education, and with the critical writings of publishers were consulted. In addition, some books in the field of formal education were included in the survey. Seventeen people were interviewed, all of whom were experienced in the selection or preparation of reading materials for adults. They included publishers, librarians, and specialists in a variety of adult programs. The constant query which guided both reading and interviewing was: What are the standards for selecting or preparing reading materials for adult study groups?

Of all the sources consulted, only fifteen experts and ten books mentioned standards for selecting reading materials. There were four instances of an exhaustive formulation of standards by leaders who dealt with the selection of adult curriculum materials. In the other instances the references to standards were incidental.

¹ The examination of literature from which expert opinions were derived was completed by the writer in June, 1934.

In all, seventy different expressions of opinion regarding the rules for selecting material were obtained from interviews and literature. They may be classified under the following heads. According to the experts, non-fiction reading material for adults should.

- A. Suit different needs of readers
- B. Aim to catch and to hold the interest of readers
- C. Possess literary merit
- D. Possess soundness and educative merit
- E. Appear in attractive format
- F. Be adjusted in difficulty to the comprehension of readers

These headings are expanded with sub-heads and quotations in Appendix I A. The frequency with which each was mentioned by twenty-five sources is stated, and the classification to which each is assigned in the Combined List of Criteria is indicated there.

The criteria gained from reading and interviews depended largely upon unvalidated opinions. Program builders had not made an experimental approach to the problem of setting up complete standards for selecting reading material; the criteria represented rather the impressions and comments of people who considered the selection of curriculum content to be a minor aspect of their adult education administration.

Nevertheless, the criteria obtained from the opinions of experts have a value. They have been developed from experience, and such opinions are sometimes wiser than generalization obtained through formally established techniques. An editor told the writer that it was a better test to submit any manuscript to a certain executive who had traveled up and down the country supervising the organization to which its potential readers belonged than to give it to several trial groups to read and criticize. The rich experience of a man who has lived with manuscript, as had a newspaper and magazine editor like Walter Hines Page, offers valuable data.

Formulation of an Experiment

Since the examination of expert opinion gave no ready answer to the question of how to select study material for adults, the information had to be secured elsewhere. It was thought that the best way to learn how to select materials was to observe the standards that adults used in selecting their own material. Accordingly, an experiment in which ordinary readers responded to real literature was planned and executed.

Selection of Experimental Reading Material

The experiment was conceived in terms of requesting adults to read and to criticize material of the type that might be used in a course of study. The first problem to be faced was the selection of experimental material.

It was obvious that samples of the curriculum content from all fields of adult education could not be included in the experiment. Conversely, it appeared wise to use fairly uniform content, so that the readers would react to the way in which material was presented rather than to its subject matter. For example, an ambitious salesman with two books before him might eagerly read the one telling him how to increase his sales, no matter how it was written, whereas a most alluring treatise on the growing of better corn might leave him untouched. But if he were given several books on salesmanship or several on corn growing, he could judge which he liked best upon grounds that would reflect more truly the standards he uses than if the single powerful criterion of interest in the subject were allowed undue weight. In view of these considerations, the investigation was limited to reading material in a single field.

Which field should become the center of exploration? Much of the present impetus is given to adult education by those who believe that common citizens need to become intelligent about civic problems. They feel that one way of developing social intelligence is to encourage wider reading upon social issues. However, the findings of the Waples-Tyler study show the difficulties in the way of persuading people to read about social problems. [3, p. 289*] In their study "common citizens" rated ten subjects in the current problems area. They considered nine of these to be of less than average interest.

An educational campaign is beginning to meet this lack of interest toward acquiring a social education in several ways: by holding forums, by broadcasting, and through movies. Nevertheless, these attempts are not sufficient. Information about ways to stimulate reading and about the selection of material for an educative social purpose grows in importance. Therefore, the area selected for this study was that of current social, economic, and political problems.

What should be the form of the experimental material? We could have selected books, magazine articles, or pamphlets. Books are too long to be used successfully in an experiment involving comparison of various methods of presentation. Magazine and news-

* Throughout this chapter numbers in brackets refer to bibliographical references to Chapter IV, as given on p. 114.

paper articles have developed a style of their own not typical of that used in more extended curriculum materials. Consequently, pamphlets seemed to be the best experimental material. They are long enough to have many of the desirable features of a book: an introduction and summary, full development of several points, and detailed information. At the same time they are short enough to leave a unitary impression and to permit one reader to peruse and to comment on several in a working day.

In addition, pamphlets acquire an importance on their own merit. They can be produced inexpensively; they are necessarily simple in their statement of issues; and they are adapted to brief group discussions. If cleansed of the taint that they have earned through long association with propaganda, they might well bear the supplementary relation to an adult curriculum that work-books do to the text in elementary and secondary schools. These considerations justified the selection of pamphlets for the experiment.

Several factors guided the selection of specific pamphlets. None was included which was either so technical or so poorly prepared that it would never be selected by a group leader in his search for good material. Each pamphlet was introductory rather than advanced. Further, it was typical of material written for the general public, prepared to reach audiences who had not acquired much background for study. It is for just such readers that new, more interesting books must be written. Only those pamphlets were selected for the experiment, therefore, that purported to be popular introductory treatments.

Following these preliminary considerations, the chief concern was to obtain pamphlets on each topic sufficiently similar in content to counterbalance preferences due solely to greater interest in topics. When similar content was obtained, wide variations in style and manner of presentation of the subject were desired. But the different series on each of the topics contained pamphlets with similar style or other quality, in order to make the series comparable. Each series had one simple and one difficult pamphlet, one that made a straight factual presentation and another that enlivened facts with dramatic techniques.

Ten topics were selected, each to be represented by three pamphlets. Pamphlets which fulfilled all requirements were found on only four of the topics. The selected material was drawn from pamphlets in a collection of Paul Hanna, at the Lincoln School Laboratory, pamphlets gathered by John Herring for the Committee on Economic

Policy, and those in the Rand School's bookstore of socialist literature.

The titles of the chosen pamphlets follow. The letter preceding each title is the key which will be used throughout the book to designate that pamphlet.

Key Topic—UNEMPLOYMENT

- B "Unemployment Relief and Public Works," Leon C. Marshall, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1933, National Crisis Series.
- C "Uncle Sam and Unemployment," Pauline E. Thompson, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1933, National Crisis Series.
- D "Unemployment and Its Remedies," Harry W. Laidler, Socialist Party of America, New York, 1931.

Topic—WAR AND PEACE

- E "Who Pays for War?" Maxwell S. Stewart, American Education Press, Columbus, O., 1933, Modern Problems Series.
- F "The Fight Against War," Albert Einstein, John Day Co., New York, 1933, John Day Pamphlets.
- G "War Resistance," William Floyd, War Resisters League, New York, 1933.

Topic—CHANGING GOVERNMENTS

- H "Roosevelt and the Constitution," Selden Smyser, American Education Press, Columbus, O., 1933, Modern Problems Series.
- I "Modern Economic Systems," Gertrude Wolff, American Education Press, Columbus, O., 1933, Modern Problems Series.
- K "The Yankee Primer," Oscar Ameringer, The American Guardian, Oklahoma City, Okla., 1933.

Topic—UNSTABLE MONEY

- O "Inflation: What Is the Gold Standard?" H. Gordon Hays, American Education Press, Columbus, O., 1933, Modern Problems Series.
- P "Unstable Money," John Strachey, John Day Co., New York, 1933, John Day Pamphlets.
- Q "Inflation and Your Money," Edward H. Collins, Duffield and Green, New York, 1933.

Each pamphlet was subdivided into sections suitable in length and unity of thought for analysis by the readers. In some cases the sectional divisions made by the authors or editors were used, but in others the editorial sections were of such uneven lengths that it was necessary to divide or to combine them.

Set-up for Obtaining Reader Criticisms

The necessity of finding adults who had enough time to give a report of their reasons for liking or disliking material was a real problem. Although several adult groups proffered their help, volunteer assistance is precarious if an experiment involves performing painstaking analyses without the incentive that may be offered by a leader who is known to the group.

A solution was unexpectedly obtained when the opportunity arose to get governmental aid. The time of forty-five people working under the Civil Works Administration auspices in New York City was granted for the experiment. At first there were ten workers reporting over several weeks, who not only read and criticized the pamphlets, but who also served as assistants to analyze the pamphlets and the opinions of the other workers. A further group of thirty-five read and wrote comments five hours a day for four days.

Each of the readers was given one series of three pamphlets at a time. Accompanying the pamphlets were a general instruction sheet (Appendix II A), instructions for rating sections (Appendix II B), a form on which to rate the sections (Graph 1, page 78), and a plain sheet of paper on which the comparison of three pamphlets was to be written.

Verbal instructions emphasized the contribution that the readers could make by being honest in their efforts to analyze and to state their reasons for interest or lack of interest in the literature. The purpose of the study was explained in terms calculated to enlist their interest and cooperation. Without attempting to circumscribe the readers' statements too much, the instructions asked them to give searching rather than superficial reasons. For example, the comment, "This is interesting because it tells about an unemployed family," was denounced as giving no real reason for the interest, and the criticism, "This is interesting because it dramatizes facts," was substituted because it was more exact.

Since uniformity of procedure was desired, even though wide latitude in the type of possible response was given, the instruction sheet was read to the group point by point. Errors or omissions by the readers in carrying out directions were noted as soon as the completed forms were returned, and individuals were helped privately to see their deficiencies. The guidance of the first ten people reporting for work separately was more satisfactory than that of the thirty-five reporting en masse. Since their chief error was occasional omission of ratings, tabulations did not always total forty-five.

When a series of three pamphlets on the same topic was first placed in his hands, each member of the reading group wrote on the plain paper the title of the pamphlet he would like to read first, and told why. He also ranked the titles and covers in the order of his preference. These criticisms are called "snap judgments."

Next he read his first choice, with the section rating sheet face down beside him. After he had scanned the pamphlet at his ordinary reading rate, he wrote a general estimate on the back of the sheet. He was given an opportunity to register his judgment of this pamphlet by marking whether it was on the whole "very interesting," "interesting," or "dull." This ranking is a major component of the Pamphlet Preference Index.

Then he read the pamphlet through slowly, grading each of its sections on the face of the sheet, which was ruled in column scales. If the section stood high in his estimation, he checked "very interesting," and for lesser degrees checked "rather interesting," "interesting," "slightly interesting," or "dull." The check was placed beside the number of the section, which was printed on the sheet. On a wide column to the right he wrote the reason for his judgment. A sample rating sheet, with the section criticisms, is given in Graph I on the following page.

After each pamphlet was evaluated individually, all three pamphlets on the same topic were compared by the reader. The reader was first asked which pamphlet was the most interesting and why. He was then requested to rank the three in the order of his preference. The reasons given in answer to the question were haphazard or repetitious and afforded no new leads; these reasons were not tabulated. The rankings for preference, however, were utilized often when pamphlets were compared.

Finally, the reader ranked the three pamphlets on these six qualities: attractiveness of print and make-up, explanation of tables and numbers, literary quality, difficulty, explanations, and relation to personal interest. The judgments on these points are a useful addition to pamphlet analyses.

Classification of Reader Comments

One worker copied on cards all the different criticisms of the sections of pamphlets. When a comment appeared two or more times, a tally mark indicating its reappearance was made on the first card. Each card contained only one aspect of a quality. If a comment consisted of several aspects, each was placed on a different card. The

comment was marked plus if it represented a favorable opinion, and minus if it represented an unfavorable opinion.

When criticisms of slightly more than half the pamphlets had been recorded, the clerk announced that few new reasons were appearing. She continued to tabulate for two more days, finding only twelve

| <u>War Resistance</u> Pamphlet | | | | | <u>G</u> Letter | <u>I</u> Number | <u>I. G.</u> Name |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----|----|----|--------------------|---|----------------------|
| Sect. | INTEREST | | | | | REASON | SAME |
| No. | V. | R. | M. | S. | D. | | |
| 1 | v | | | | | Very effective initial sentence - a paradox. Good definition of terms. | |
| 2 | v | | | | | Good use of pro and con. Forceful and clear writing. | |
| 3 | v | | | | | Intelligent use of historical information. | |
| 4 | v | | | | | Good, easy reading. Arouses the emotions. | |
| 5 | | | | v | | Lacks terseness. | |
| 6 | | | | v | | Timely and well put. Excellent summary. Connects all sections. Purpose made clear. | 5 |
| 7 | v | | | | | | |
| 8 | v | | | | | | |
| 9 | | | | | | | |
| 10 | | | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | |

GRAPH 1. A Typical Section Rating Sheet

new reasons. On the last day of the experiment reasons were tabulated for frequency only. Ninety-seven per cent of the different reasons for liking or disliking the literature had been given by the time sixty-one per cent of the pamphlets had been read. Or, the forty-five readers had practically exhausted their variety of judgment after commenting on seven pamphlets each.

The stream of reader reactions brought an immediate need for classifying them. The cards containing similar reasons were placed together. By the end of several days enough different responses had been obtained to necessitate serious effort in grouping them under categories. Three workers, including the writer, classified all the cards, compared classifications, and achieved a common form with topical headings and subdivisions. The form contained many overlappings, since different interpretations of the same phrases were recorded under several heads. This form was satisfactory in handling the data as they appeared. A more orderly classification was needed, however, before other investigators could use the list as a guide in cataloguing criticisms.

The writer re-ordered all the original data with changed major divisions. The new and final organization contained, in addition to the classification of the section reactions, all the responses obtained from general criticisms of pamphlets, from snap judgments, and from experts' opinions. It is referred to throughout as the Combined List of Criteria. This complete list contains thirty-eight criteria.

The Combined List was developed from the classification of the section reactions. Responses from the other three sources of criteria were classified under the Combined List, with occasional adaptations to suit new expressions of opinion. In order to assign the general criticisms to the Combined List, two workers allocated each opinion to appropriate headings. The first worker tabulated frequency of opinions under each heading, the second wrote the classification beside the criticism on the original general criticism sheet, and re-tabulated. Although the proper classification of each separate criticism was not checked, agreement upon each classification must have been close, since the final rankings for frequency of occurrence were the same. The general criticisms were so similar in phrasing to the section reactions that no separate listing of them has been made in this report. Samples of general criticisms of two pamphlets are given in Chapter V. The frequency of mention of each standard, in terms of the Combined List of Criteria, is stated in Appendix I C.

The snap judgment criticisms for each pamphlet, in which readers explained why one pamphlet looked more interesting than the others, were written on a large sheet of paper. They were likewise classified by two workers under the headings of the Combined List of Criteria; they were allotted to only seventeen of the thirty-eight heads. The frequency of each criticism and its classification may be seen in Appendix I B.

The thirty-eight standards in the Combined List of Criteria are given in Table V at the end of the next section.

Comparative Importance of Different Standards

Up to this point, the discussion has emphasized the need of obtaining as complete a list as possible of the readers' reasons for liking and disliking given reading material. When a long list was obtained, it was evident that all the criteria were not equally important. The next problem, consequently, was to discover which criteria were the most important.

The meaning of importance in respect to criteria is furnished in this study by statistical methods. That criterion is most important which is most often mentioned by readers. Some psychologists object to this definition of importance, on the ground that people do not always recognize the fundamental, half-conscious reasons for their preferences. In this particular kind of investigation that objection is not valid. We want to know what people think or say is wrong with books. Their verbalized opinions are the standards which *they* use in judging literature. For instance, a piece of material may draw the criticism repeatedly, "This has too many statistics." It becomes the author's task to find why his presentation of statistics is onerous to readers. To relieve the bad impression he may rearrange or reemphasize the figures rather than remove them. No matter what the basic trouble with the figures, the most important element for the readers is the reiterated one of "too many statistics." They will not like the material until they believe that the objectionable feature is eliminated.

The opposite of this statement, that infrequency of mention indicates lack of importance, is of course not sound. A reason does not lack importance because it has not been named. There are doubtless not enumerated in this list some factors which have a part in determining judgments. Certainly all the criteria mentioned here affected attitudes toward the pamphlets; otherwise they would not have occurred frequently enough to be placed on the list. None of them can be ignored, therefore, in the selection or preparation of books on current problems. Infrequency of mention means only that the importance of the standard is less.

In accordance with the concept that frequency of appearance of specific standards is for practical purposes synonymous with importance, rankings of 1 to 38 were established for each of the four lists of expert opinions, section reactions, general criticisms, snap judgments.

Since each list was compiled from a different viewpoint, the rankings naturally did not coincide. When readers made general criticisms of pamphlets they mentioned difficulty of concepts most often. When they made detailed comments upon sections of pamphlets, they mentioned most frequently expository techniques. The title was the most important determinant for the selection of a pamphlet under snap judgments. When experts were setting standards they mentioned most frequently the necessity for techniques for relating subject to reader. Thus the four different methods of eliciting standards gave different emphases.

The advisability of combining the four lists into a single importance ranking was considered. Viewed from one angle, an average cloaks the divergencies of viewpoints, for it does not do complete justice to any one angle of the problem, and it may obscure some vital factors. For example, the topic of expository techniques ranks 1 in one list, and 9.5, 11.5, and 19 in the three other lists composing the Combined List of Criteria. An average does not reveal as plainly as the results of the section reactions how vital expository techniques are.

On the other hand, anyone confronted with four lists of from seventeen to thirty-eight criteria each will appreciate the need of simplification. An average smooths discrepancies and throws common elements into relief. It shows clearly the points upon which the majority agree. For instance, it is not impressive that techniques for relating subject to reader are considered important by someone. But the statement is heeded more respectfully when four methods of evaluation place this standard in the highest quarter of importance. An average tends to balance automatically the varying impressions that must be adjusted intellectually if this statistical aid is not furnished.

In view of these arguments on both sides, the frequency of standards in the four different lists were averaged; but the averages were interpreted liberally. The rank orders of each standard in the four lists were added, and these resulting sums were ranked for importance.²

The thirty-eight standards by which readers judged the pamphlets are listed in Table V. In the general groupings of *content*, *form*, *catching and holding reader interest*, and *dealing with controversial issues*, there are fourteen main heads, those denoted by Arabic num-

² The frequency of each standard in expert opinions is given in Appendix I A-2, of snap judgments in I B, of general and section criticisms in I C. The method of formulating the combined ranks from the ranks of the four components is shown in Appendix I D.

TABLE V

Combined List of Criteria for Judging Non-Fiction Literature, Ranked for Importance*

| Criterion | Frequency Rank | Quarter Placement |
|--|----------------|-------------------|
| A. Content | | |
| 1. Historical allusions | 30 | 4 |
| 2. Presentation of figures | 6.5 | 1 |
| 3. Treatment of subject | | |
| a. Timeliness | 15 | 2 |
| b. Selection of information | 6.5 | 1 |
| c. Quality of information | 3 | 1 |
| B. Form | | |
| 1. Difficulty | | |
| a. Terms | 20 | 3 |
| b. Concepts | 2 | 1 |
| c. Abstractness | 26.5 | 3 |
| d. Condensation | 8 | 1 |
| 2. Literary quality | | |
| a. Organization | 18.5 | 2 |
| b. Form and grammar | 25 | 3 |
| c. Vitality | 4 | 1 |
| d. Rhythm and fluency | 28 | 3 |
| e. Concise, simple language | 13 | 2 |
| f. Adult approach | 36 | 4 |
| 3. Literary techniques | | |
| a. Dramatic techniques | 10 | 2 |
| b. Expository techniques | 5 | 1 |
| c. Figures of speech | 38 | 4 |
| 4. Format | | |
| a. Type | 22 | 3 |
| b. Size of book | 23 | 3 |
| c. Cover and illustrations | 14 | 2 |
| d. Footnotes, index, and table of contents | 35 | 4 |
| e. Sections and captions | 31 | 4 |
| f. Title of book | 21 | 3 |
| g. Make-up of book | 32 | 4 |
| C. Catching and holding reader interest | | |
| 1. Introduction | | |
| a. Outline of plan | 33 | 4 |
| b. Awakening interest | 17 | 2 |

* The frequencies upon which the ranks for importance are based are given in Appendix I.

TABLE V (Continued)

| Criterion | Frequency Rank | Quarter Placement |
|--|----------------|-------------------|
| 2. Conclusion | | |
| a. Summary of book | 24 | 3 |
| b. Outcome of reader interest | 11 | 2 |
| 3. Techniques for relating problem to reader | 1 | 1 |
| 4. Emotional appeal | 9 | 1 |
| 5. Use of famous author's name | 26.5 | 3 |
| D. Dealing with controversial issues | | |
| 1. Author's display of own viewpoint | | |
| a. Non-partisan | 12 | 2 |
| b. Fair partisan | 34 | 4 |
| c. Prejudiced partisan | 29 | 4 |
| 2. Techniques of controversy | | |
| a. Presentation of argument | 16 | 2 |
| b. Criticism | 37 | 4 |
| c. Influence on reader | 18.5 | 2 |

erals. These fourteen heads are the center of the research reported later in this chapter and in Chapter V.

The frequency rank to the right of each standard is a combination of four ranks, as explained above. The four components upon which the ranks are based did not agree well enough among themselves to permit the designation of one point on a thirty-eight point scale to have significance; this frequency rank is too detailed to be valid. Therefore, the last column of the table, showing the quarter of the rank distribution into which each standard falls, is a more honest picture of importance than the frequency rank.

A thorough knowledge of the nature of the nine most frequently mentioned criteria and of their application to material written for different groups would give a writer most of the help he demands for preparing popular material. The subsidiary criteria in the second and lower quarters of the importance list contribute to a more thorough evaluation of the material. Even though the topics under *controversial issues* are placed in the second or the fourth quarter, they are valuable keys to handling certain types of current literature. Most of the standards under *format* are in the third or fourth quarters; yet the fact that the cover, illustrations, and title played a definite role in the formation of snap judgments concerning the

pamphlets should not be overlooked. In the same way, the function of each of the other criteria can be indicated, as will be shown in Chapter VI.

STUDY OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

A General Picture of the Group

Unless there is at hand considerable information regarding a group for which books are to be chosen, an unlimited number of general principles of book selection and a thorough knowledge of the make-up of books are of little value. To illustrate: All of the canons of literary taste state that *Hamlet* is a masterpiece, yet no teacher of an average fourth grade would require her pupils to read it in its original form. Of course, the teacher accepts literary principles and believes that *Hamlet* is a work of art, but she knows her group's limitations in education and experience. The more an author or leader knows about a group of potential readers, the more efficient becomes the writing or selecting of appropriate material for its use. One concession to this fact has been made in the acceptance, in theory at least, of the principle that audiences have varying abilities which must be recognized in the use of words and concepts. But more than mere word shifting is necessary if literature catches a group's imagination and answers its needs, as well as provides for its vocabulary limitations. If a leader's choice of material is to be wise, he must know the group's prejudices, its interests, its allegiances, and its large and small problems.

The Civil Works Administration group may be considered fairly representative of other adult education groups. It contained a miscellaneous assortment of individuals such as one would find in many classes. Although the group did not share that common interest in studying which brings most classes together, its members had in common both the experience of having been unemployed over a number of months, and a college level of education. However, the analysis of the group is not intended to present a typical picture, but rather to indicate one method of discovering some of the factors back of certain preferences for materials.

In this study the experimental group was analyzed as if it were an adult education class for which further material was to be chosen. A questionnaire,³ which was answered in detail, was submitted to the members. Each question about the members that was asked was based either upon a general factor that other experimenters had considered to be important, or upon specific factors that might determine,

³ The questionnaire is given in Appendix II D

to some extent, their interest in this particular set of pamphlets. The general questions dealt with facts in their experience: age, sex, education, positions held, religious and political affiliations, and marital status. The specific questions concerned education in the areas covered by the pamphlets, regular reading habits, and interest in the four topics around which the experimental literature was organized.

Three of the important facts about people which influence their outlook on life are sex, age, and marital status. Most of the members of the Civil Works Administration group were young unmarried men. In the group of forty-five there were thirty-three men and twelve women. Thirty-nine members were unmarried. Thirty were in the young adult age range between 21 and 27. Two were between 18 and 20; three were over 45 years of age.

A key to mind sets and loyalties may be found in religious and political affiliations. Twenty out of forty-five members replied to a question concerning church membership, "None." There were seven Catholics, seven Protestants, and eleven Jews in the group. Many of them evaded political commitment: twenty-four checked "split ticket." There were two Republicans, eleven Democrats, six Socialists, one Fascist, and no Communists. The interests of the workers were more radical than the returns showed. One member of the group regularly read *The Daily Worker*, a Communist paper, and several were active in unemployment demonstrations. There was obvious approval of radical pronouncements in the pamphlets.

Economic status is frequently an index to interests. Ordinarily an estimate of economic status may be derived from knowledge about occupations. The fact that the Civil Works Administration workers were accepting relief made their present economic status obvious. Questions concerning their vocational training and the types of jobs they had held indicated the economic group to which they had previously belonged and helped to identify their interests. Most of the workers had been trained for professional or business occupations and had held jobs in the fields for which they were trained. They noted long lists of other interim jobs, such as cashier, druggist, usher, promoter, and salesman.

Ability in the use of language is ordinarily judged by the amount of education. This is a rough substitute for the more exact measurement of reading and intelligence tests. In the Civil Works Administration group, all but one participant had been to college. There were twenty-nine college graduates, and eight who had postgraduate degrees. Thirteen of the group had taken no courses in the social

sciences with the exception of high school economics. Twenty-five had courses in sociology, thirty-six in economics, and twenty-two in political science. Fifteen members had studied one or more courses in all of the above fields.

Attitudes toward specific reading material may depend in part upon the amount and kind of reading that people are accustomed to do. Questions concerning reading done by the group elicited the following information: Although sixteen people had read no books in the previous month, the remaining thirty-one reported a total of eighty-five books read during that period. All of them read newspapers. The returns showed that sixty-six magazines were read by thirty-seven persons. Twenty-four different magazines were mentioned. Eighteen of the group had read one or more pamphlets in the previous year.

Finally, it is valuable to know the degree of interest group members have in the material that is to be studied. Each person was asked to check the four topics under which the pamphlets were grouped to indicate the ones he was already interested in reading about, and then to rank all four topics in order of their probable interest. Only three in the group said that they were not interested in any of the four topics listed. Eleven were interested in all of the topics. Before the experiment, the topic of war and peace was considered most interesting, and unstable money least interesting. At the end, unemployment moved to first place, and unstable money remained last. (See Table X, page 103.)

The analysis of the questionnaires made it possible to interpret many responses to the pamphlets. The radical tendency of some members made the espousal of the radical pamphlets appear natural. The conservative educational and professional background of others explained one reason for the violent division of opinion upon a socialistic and a pacifistic pamphlet. The dynamic title of *Fight Against War* would appeal to young people and was one of the most popular. Since everyone had been to college, the frequent comment of "too elementary" beside many sections was not surprising; on the other hand, dislike of statistics was unexpectedly strong. If adult educators have similar information about their groups, it may aid in indicating some subjects of study and styles of writing which would probably be acceptable to the students.

The experimental group did not respond to the literature as a unit. Some⁴ of the knowledge about the group was analyzed to find

⁴ All of the information obtained in the questionnaire about the group was in-

explanations for the similarities and the differences of opinions. For instance, was there any difference in response between the men and the women in the group? Did people who had had training in social sciences think somewhat alike upon these pamphlets dealing with social questions? Did their opinions differ widely from those of people without such training? Answers to such questions helped to clarify the problems involved in formulating general rules for selecting reading material.

In a search for general trends the responses of the group as a whole will be presented. Then preferences of random halves of the group will be inspected, in order to find how reliable the general trends might be considered. Finally, the preferences and standards of judgment of parts of the entire group will point to more specific rules for selecting reading material.

An Index to Preference for Pamphlets

Before the responses of the group or any part of it could be studied, it was necessary to condense the readers' reactions into manageable form. The vague impressions that this investigator received from reading several hundred pages of criticisms had to be reduced to concrete figures. The condensation of criticisms was performed by expressing the interest of pamphlets in one index and by classifying the thousands of criticisms under a few heads. The scale was called the Pamphlet Preference Index; the classification of reasons was reduced from thirty-eight criteria which have been discussed before to the fourteen main standards in the Combined List.

A Pamphlet Preference Index, which gave the order of readers' preferences for the twelve pamphlets, was compiled. The Index is an instrument for comparing known qualities of the pamphlets with the groups' order of preference for them.

Two different sources furnished the basis for the Pamphlet Preference Index. The first was the readers' general rating of the pamphlets on a three-point scale. The second was the judgment which they expressed by specific ratings of each section of the pamphlets on a five-point scale. Following his reading of the pamphlet, as we have said before, the reader marked it "very interesting" (1), "interesting" (2), or "dull" (3). Each vote was given a weighting of 1, 2, or 3. The weighted votes were added together, and the sum was divided by the number of people voting. The average ratings

spected for its probable bearing upon the readers' opinions, but most of it revealed no clear-cut distinctions that could be used to show the correctness of the hypotheses leading to the request.

thus obtained for each pamphlet were ranked from most interesting to least interesting. This yielded ranks for *general* preference.

Ranks for *section* preference were next obtained. Every section in each of the pamphlets was rated on a five-point scale: "very interesting" (1), "rather interesting" (2), "interesting" (3), "slightly interesting" (4), and "dull" (5). The average preference for each section was obtained from the weighted sum of the ratings in the same manner as the average preference for pamphlets. The average of all the sections in a pamphlet were added, and the sum was divided by the number of sections. The resulting dividends for the twelve pamphlets were ranked from most to least interesting, showing the order of preference for pamphlets according to their section ratings.

These ranks on the basis of preference for sections of the pamphlets and of preference for pamphlets as a whole were combined, as shown in Table VI, to give the Pamphlet Preference Index.

TABLE VI

The Pamphlet Preference Index: Combined Ranks of Twelve Pamphlets on the Basis of Preference for Pamphlet as a Whole and by Sections

| Pamphlet | Rank on Pamphlet Preference | Rank on Section Preference | Sum of Section and Pamphlet Ranks | Combined Rank |
|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Unemployment | | | | |
| B | 9 | 9 | 18 | 9 |
| C | 4 | 4 | 8 | 3.5 |
| D | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1.5 |
| War and Peace | | | | |
| E | 10.5 | 11 | 21.5 | 11 |
| F | 3 | 7 | 10 | 5 |
| G | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Government | | | | |
| H | 7.5 | 10 | 17.5 | 8 |
| I | 6 | 6 | 12 | 6 |
| K | 7.5 | 5 | 12.5 | 7 |
| Unstable Money | | | | |
| O | 10.5 | 12 | 22.5 | 12 |
| P | 5 | 3 | 8 | 3.5 |
| Q | 12 | 8 | 20 | 10 |

Note. 1 always signifies most popular, and 12 least. The averages upon which these rankings are based are given in Appendix III A.

A brief examination of Table VI shows that the two most popular pamphlets, both in the combined rankings and in their constituents, are in the well liked series on peace and unemployment. Two of the least popular pamphlets are in the least liked series on money. Undoubtedly the general topic contributes to attitudes toward specific pamphlets. But a well liked topic does not guarantee popularity: E, in the popular series on peace, was one of the poorly rated pamphlets. Conversely P was above average in preference, although it dealt with the little appreciated topic of money.

Usually the section rank corresponded closely with preference for the whole pamphlet. The reason for the unfavorable section ratings on F and subsequent higher general preference, or for the good section ranks and low general impression of pamphlet Q, was not determined.

An informal check on the accuracy of the Pamphlet Preference Index was obtained through another measure. This measure was the average ranking of interest in the three pamphlets performed by the readers when they finished each series. It was found that their average ranking corresponded exactly to the rankings of each series of pamphlets in the Pamphlet Preference Index.

Most Frequently Mentioned Standards

The thirty-eight criteria, under which all of the criticisms of pamphlets were classified, were too cumbersome to be submitted to rank order correlation.⁵ Therefore the thirty-eight criteria were grouped under the fourteen topics which were preceded by Arabic numerals in the Combined List in Table V. The frequency counts of each of the sub-heads were allocated to the main topics under which they occur. For instance, a, b, and c were classed with A 3 as part of the selection and quality of information.

The fourteen chief standards which forty-five readers, in contact with concrete material, said affected their attitude toward the material are given in Table VII. The topics are arranged from most to least often mentioned.

In studying the significance of the order of criteria derived from the entire group's two chief modes of criticism, no one will be surprised to see the topic, literary quality, which includes a sub-topic

⁵ The statistical method of discovering the degree of relationship existing between different factors which is employed throughout this study is rank order correlation. The symbol of the correlation is the Greek letter, rho. For explanation of the method, see [2], p. 190.

TABLE VII

Order of Importance of Fourteen Principal Criteria, Based on Combined Frequency of All General Criticisms and Section Reactions

| Rank | Criterion |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Literary quality |
| 2 | Difficulty |
| 3 | Selection and quality of information |
| 4 | Literary techniques |
| 5 | Techniques of controversy |
| 6 | Summary and appeal at conclusion |
| 7 | Emotional appeal |
| 8 | Techniques of gaining reader interest |
| 9 | Presentation of figures |
| 10 | Plan and appeal of introduction |
| 11 | Author's expression of viewpoint |
| 12 | Format |
| 13 | Historical allusions |
| 14 | Use of famous author's name |

of vitality, together with difficulty at the top of the column in Table VII. Writers and critics of the "sugar coating school" will find it hard to explain why a demand for well selected and adequately treated information should rank third, or why literary techniques, which stress the need of clear explanations, should follow in fourth place. Since the experimental material dealt with current controversial subjects, it is to be expected that the methods used by authors under techniques of controversy would receive frequent comment from readers.

The topics in the lower half of the list received fewer comments, partly because they treated specialized aspects which did not occur as frequently as did the need, say, of adequate information. For instance, the quantity of historical data in the twelve pamphlets was neither large nor obtrusive and did not receive much attention from readers. Frequency of opportunity for comment is only a partial explanation for variation in rankings: there were twelve introductions and twelve conclusions, yet the conclusions induced many more specific comments than the introductions. The list as presented gives an interesting picture of the averaged judgments of this group of experimental readers.

Variability of the Group

A skeptical reader might well respond to the list of criteria just presented with, "Interesting, if true." Several methods were employed to find out how reliable the ranking of criteria in their order of importance could be considered. The order of criteria presented in Table VII was a composite of general and of section criticisms. Two separate steps are required to discover whether the ranks would generally occur in the stated order. First, the variability of the group in making its criticisms by a single method should be analyzed. Second, the amount of variability produced by two different methods of determining criteria should be discovered.

A single pamphlet was selected for analysis. Pamphlet I, *Modern Economic Systems*, was chosen because it had demonstrated a popularity above the average, and had elicited thoughtful, unemotional responses. Every section reaction made by readers in commenting on pamphlet I was classified. The papers containing each reader's criticisms were then sorted in two piles at random, and the comments for each pile were tabulated under their proper classifications. The rank order of frequency of the fourteen criteria for one random sub-group was correlated with that for the other random sub-group. The correlation between section reactions of random halves of the whole group was .93.

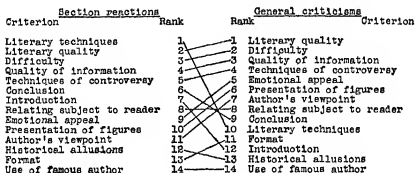
When halves of the group were compared in the same way on the rank order of frequency of classified general criticisms, the correlation was .89. These high correlations indicate that the rank order of topics obtained by either method was reliable for this group of forty-five readers.

Criticisms made by the whole group were kept together when the different methods of criticizing pamphlets were compared. The rank order of all the classified general criticisms on pamphlet I was correlated with the rank order of section reactions. Rho was naturally lower than when self-correlations of single methods of criticism were made: the correlation was .77.⁶

When all twelve pamphlets were considered, the rank order correlation between general and section criticisms was .68.⁶ The correlation of .68 is statistically significant: rankings made by general criticisms and by section reactions frequently are almost the same. The two methods do, however, elicit sufficient differences in emphasis on standards to warrant the use of both techniques. The ranks which have just been discussed, showing the relative importance

⁶ The computation of these correlations is given in Appendix III C.

of the standards in section reactions and in general criticisms, are given in Graph 2.



Rho is .68

GRAPH 2. Criteria Ranks of Section Reactions Contrasted with Criteria Ranks of General Criticisms for Twelve Pamphlets

The most striking feature of Graph 2 is the comparatively close agreement between rankings for the most important criteria (the four highest) and for the least important (the three lowest). Most of the variation, with the exception of comments on literary techniques, was found in the central six topics. The need of clear explanations and the remarks about dramatic techniques, combined under literary techniques, held chief place in the section analysis of pamphlets; they were mentioned infrequently in the final criticisms.

Graph 2 indicates that both a detailed examination and a general criticism of the pamphlets on controversial problems led readers to judge them largely according to their literary quality, their difficulty, the quality and selection of information, and the techniques of controversy which the author used. If section reactions were the instrument, introductions and conclusions received more attention than they did in general criticisms. The general criticisms stressed the emotional appeal of the literature, its presentation of figures, and the author's display of viewpoint more than the detailed analysis did. According to both methods, format, historical presentations, and use of a famous author were least important.

The variability of the group in mentioning the various standards has just been presented. The experimental group's variation in its preference for the pamphlets will now be discussed. Knowing the order in which the fourteen major criteria were ranked was of gen-

eral interest to other investigators, both for guidance in research work and as an item of information. Other investigators are interested in the experimental readers' relative preference for twelve pamphlets only in order to interpret the responses of the group. It makes no difference to them whether the order of preference established here is universal, or even whether the same group could be predicted to rank the pamphlets in the same order again. An indication is necessary, though, of the internal consistency of group choices, in order to derive generalizations about the experimental group and its attitudes.

The question to be answered is, How widely would random portions of the group differ in their indications of preference? Discovery of the random expectancy of preference rankings will tell whether discrepancies in choices between selected sub-groups are accidental, or whether they might rather be due to the influence of a selective factor.

The most accurate designation of preferences for pamphlets was made by the experimental subjects when they ranked three pamphlets on the same topic in order of preference. The strong and weak points of each pamphlet had to be weighed before this ranking was performed. Since the readers never ranked all twelve pamphlets together, the three rankings in each series of four were not directly comparable to one another. None of the usual statistical methods of correlation showed the relationship between expressions of preference for all twelve pamphlets.

A simple statistical device was used to compare the differences between two groups' placement of each pamphlet directly. The average rating of a pamphlet by one random sub-group was subtracted from the average pamphlet rating of the other sub-group, and the difference was squared. The sum of the twelve squared differences gave an indication of the amount of divergence between two groups' opinions of all the pamphlets.

This may be illustrated with pamphlet B; the figures are given in Table VIII. Each of the members of random Group A rated pamphlet B either 1, 2, or 3 in interest. The average of the ratings performed by the twenty-two readers in Group A was 2.23. The average rating upon Pamphlet B by Group B was 2.32. The difference between the averages of Groups A and B was .09; the squared difference was .0081. The two groups agreed rather closely upon their rating of pamphlet B.

The average preferences of random halves of the group can be

compared from data in Table VIII. A clear difference between the first and second and third place ratings of the pamphlets in each series was generally distinguished. Groups A and B differed little from one another in their ratings of the series dealing with unemployment and government. In the series of pamphlets dealing with war, random Group A showed little choice between the pamphlets; but random Group B indicated a strong preference for pamphlet F, and a strong dislike of E. While Group B did not like O, in the money series, Group A ranked O as average.

TABLE VIII

Average Rankings for Preference of Each Pamphlet in Its Series of Three,* as Indicated by Random Groups

| Pamphlet | Average Ranking by Group A† (1) | Average Ranking by Group B† (2) | Difference between Ranks (3) | Squared Difference (4) |
|---------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Unemployment | | | | |
| B | 2.23 | 2.32 | -.09 | .0081 |
| C | 2.09 | 2.05 | .04 | .0016 |
| D | 1.41 | 1.58 | -.17 | .0289 |
| Peace | | | | |
| E | 1.79 | 2.33 | -.54 | .2916 |
| F | 2.00 | 1.55 | .45 | .2025 |
| G | 2.00 | 2.00 | .00 | .0000 |
| Government | | | | |
| H | 2.14 | 2.15 | -.01 | .0001 |
| I | 1.76 | 1.84 | -.08 | .0064 |
| K | 1.99 | 1.83 | .16 | .0256 |
| Money | | | | |
| O | 2.10 | 2.50 | -.40 | .1600 |
| P | 1.59 | 1.83 | -.24 | .0576 |
| Q | 2.15 | 1.64 | .51 | .2601 |
| Sum of squared difference | | | | 1.043 |

Note. 1.00 would signify a rating of most popular by all readers

* The readers ranked each three pamphlets in a series in order of preference.

† Groups A and B are random halves of the group of 44 readers.

The third column in Table VIII, showing the difference between the average preference rankings of the two groups, is interesting. There was a difference of less than .1 between the two groups' averages for five pamphlets, and a comparatively great difference of .4 or

.5 for four pamphlets. The variability in preferences of random halves of the group indicates variability in the group as a whole. The sum of the last column, 1.043, is a convenient condensation. In order to ascertain the amount of variability in twelve choices by Groups A and B, the figure must be compared with other sums of the squared differences of averages expressed by selected groups. (See Table IX B, page 101.)

There are two impressions which need to be transferred from this discussion of random groups to the next section on selected groups. First, when the section reactions of random Groups A and B were compared for ranking of criteria, a correlation of .93 was obtained. Second, a fairly wide difference in preference for pamphlets between random Groups A and B was indicated by the sum of the squared difference, 1.043.

Similarities and Differences among Selected Groups

The heart of one of the problems of providing appropriate reading materials for large numbers of people lies in the analysis of small, selected groups. It is obvious that the "buckshot method" of sending a broadside of print aimed at no one in particular, in the hope of hitting enough readers to pay for a book, has not been particularly effective from the viewpoint either of publisher-producers or of adult educator-consumers. The most fundamental remedy for this difficulty is the study of the groups who will use reading materials, for the purpose of obtaining books that will fit their needs. Not only should whole groups be analyzed, but individual needs should be met. Exacting care should be taken to fill individual and small group desires as adequately as possible.

Analysis of individuals' reactions to reading materials is a long process. It would be undesirable as well as impossible to collect information on individual preferences to guide the selection of each piece of printed curriculum material. There is another solution to the problem. The saving factor lies in the common elements of people's tastes. A book that one person likes to read should fit the needs of other people like him; literature prepared for one group should be well suited to other similar groups.

As fast as the analyzing process is carried on, a synthesizing, generalizing process should be set in motion. In studying one group, factors influencing reading tastes which might also be operative in other groups are sought. Individuals are analyzed to discover their similarities to other people, as well as their differences from others.

When small groups have been compared to find their similarities a number of times, and the same relationship continues to exist, then general rules can be formulated.

For instance, in a moment we will compare the reactions of the men and the women in this experiment. It will be shown that in the reading of current problems literature their standards of judgment and their reading preferences are closely similar. If this similarity prevails on a number of tests, it would be possible to set up as a working hypothesis that, granted an initial interest of the same strength, men and women enjoy reading the same materials with no need for sex differentiation. On the other hand, a wide difference in preference for reading materials will be shown between better and less educated sub-groups. If further studies show that difference in number of years of schooling may have been the primary cause of this difference in reading tastes, then permanent provision should be made by editors to care for readers on different educational levels.

This information can only be secured by observing the effect of specific reading material upon groups and individuals. All the groups and individuals in the country will not have to be studied, because every careful analysis of small groups will contribute to total knowledge so rapidly that fairly definite guides to preparation and selection of reading could be proposed before long.

The relation of three facts about the experimental group to the judgments of criteria and the preferences for pamphlets expressed by them were examined. The first was a general fact, a comparison of men with women. The second was more specialized, the contrast of two levels of education. The third, of direct significance to this problem, was a comparison of a group that had had college training along the line of the subject matter of the pamphlets with another group that did not have such training.

In order to discover the relation between these facts and the evaluation of literature, two questions were asked about these sub-groups. First, did the contrasted groups mention approximately the same reasons for liking or disliking the material? The answer to this question would determine to some extent whether different or similar standards might be applied in selecting reading matter for them. Second, how closely did the sub-groups agree in their preference for pamphlets? Disagreement upon a piece of literature is produced in large measure by differences in past experiences. If people with one experience in common (such as being feminine) disagree with a group having a different experience in common (that of being masculine),

then that experience may be judged to have some effect on preference. We are searching for experiences that may be predicted to influence attitudes toward literature.

The answer to the first question is based upon an analysis of the responses to pamphlet I, which, as we have said before, drew reasoned unemotional criticisms from readers. A high correlation between standards of judgment was noted earlier: the section reactions of one random half of the group were compared with the section reactions of the other half. Let us see what happened when two sub-groups, studied because of their differences, presented their rank order of standards.

| Men | | Women | |
|----------------------------|------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Section reactions | | Section reactions | |
| Criterion | Rank | Rank | Criterion |
| Literary techniques | 1 | 1 | Literary techniques |
| Quality of information | 2 | 2 | Difficulty |
| Difficulty | 3 | 3 | Quality of information |
| Techniques of controversy | 4 | 4 | Techniques of controversy |
| Literary quality | 5 | 5 | Literary quality |
| Author's viewpoint | 6 | 6 | Presentation of figures |
| Introduction | 7 | 7 | Introduction |
| Emotional appeal | 8 | 8 | Conclusion |
| Conclusion | 9 | 9 | Author's viewpoint |
| Relating subject to reader | 10 | 10 | Historical allusions |
| Presentation of figures | 11 | 11 | Emotional appeal |
| Historical allusions | 12 | 12 | Relating subject to reader |
| Format | 13 | 13 | Format |
| Use of famous author | 14 | 14 | Use of famous author |

Rho is .89

GRAPH 3. Men Contrasted with Women on Their Order of Mentioned Criteria in Section Criticisms of Pamphlet I

There were twelve women in the experiment. Their order of mentioning topics influencing judgment was compared with that of the remainder of the group, thirty-three men. The correlation was .89. The agreement in ranking was almost unanimous on the first five and on the last two criteria. The graph shows that quality of explanation, difficulty, selection of information, and techniques of controversy were most important for the women. The men commented upon selection of information somewhat oftener than they did difficulty. The largest difference between the sub-groups was in presentation of figures, which women cited as a reason for their preference for or dislike of pamphlets five ranks oftener than men did.

Thirteen students who had pursued courses in the social sciences were compared with fifteen students who either had had no such courses or who had had a single one in high school economics. Al

though the correlation of .85 was lower than that for men contrasted with women, Graph 4 shows a striking agreement on most of the rankings. In nine out of fourteen instances the rankings by the two groups were identical. The first five ranks and the last two were in the same order as that upon which the men and women agreed. The reason for a lower correlation than between the ranks of the standards erected by men and women is plain in the lines at the center of Graph 4, which are longer than those in Graph 3.

| Students | | Nonstudents | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Criterion | Section reactions Rank | Rank | Section reactions Criterion |
| Literary techniques | 1 | 1 | Literary techniques |
| Difficulty | 2 | 2 | Difficulty |
| Quality of information | 3 | 3 | Quality of information |
| Techniques of controversy | 4 | 4 | Techniques of controversy |
| Literary quality | 5 | 5 | Literary quality |
| Author's viewpoint | 6 | 6 | Introduction |
| Relating subject to reader | 7 | 7 | Conclusion |
| Introduction | 8 | 8 | Emotional appeal |
| Emotional appeal | 9 | 9 | Author's viewpoint |
| Historical allusions | 10 | 10 | Historical allusions |
| Presentation of figures | 11 | 11 | Presentation of figures |
| Conclusion | 12 | 12 | Relating subject to reader |
| Format | 13 | 13 | Format |
| Use of famous author | 14 | 14 | Use of famous author |

Rho is .85

GRAPH 4. Social Science Students Contrasted with Non-Students of Social Science in Order of Mentioning Criteria in Section Criticisms of Pamphlet I

One might expect students of the social sciences to be critical or reserved in their opinions; the contrary appeared to be true in the experimental group. They gave evidence of an emotional reaction five rankings above the group which had not studied social science; they criticized the author's viewpoint three rankings more frequently than the other group did. The untrained students commented much oftener on the conclusion.

In considering the sub-groups that differed in education, the eight postgraduates gave a total of 112 criticisms, whereas the eight less voluble two-year students gave only 72 criticisms. A high correlation between the two groups for frequency of mention of standards was found, .89. However, this was partially due to the coincidence of rankings. There was, nevertheless, the same tendency for these two sub-groups to place standards in about the same order as the other sub-groups did. The one exception is that the two-year college group ranked literary quality second and presentation of figures fifth, reversing the order followed by the other five sub-groups.

A close agreement has just been presented between the criteria that divergent groups named when they evaluated pamphlets. Less unanimity is found in their preference for pamphlets. Although they mentioned almost the same standards in judging the material, they did not necessarily have the same preferences for the material. The reason for this seeming incongruity is that one sub-group may have mentioned positive criticisms under the heading of a standard and the other sub-group may have mentioned negative criticisms. Quality of explanation remains a dominant heading, whether the reader said that the explanations were good or poor. In order to find out why the postgraduate group thought one pamphlet excellent while the undergraduate group considered it poor, it would be necessary to inspect the comments by each group under the various standards.⁷

In the discussion of the preferences of random groups,⁸ a method was shown whereby the average ratings on a pamphlet by two groups might be contrasted. The difference between two groups' ratings of each pamphlet was obtained, squared, and added. The sum of the squared differences was 1.043 for random halves of the experimental group.

The average differences between preference ratings of men and women were far less than those between the random samples. A squared difference sum of .5473 indicated that the women agreed with the men on the degree of interest of most of the pamphlets. The disagreement between the social science and non-social science groups was little more than random, with a squared difference sum of 1.200. The real disagreement occurred between those who had been to college two years or less and the other sub-group with postgraduate degrees. For them, the squared difference sum of interest ratings was 3.525. Table IX shows these differences in more detail.

An examination of Table IX, part A, reveals the agreement and divergence of opinion for each of the sub-groups in their ratings of pamphlets. The averages of random sub-groups, when compared with other averages, seemed to be really random. The random sub-groups' agreement on H was inconsistent with disagreements about H by the other sub-groups. The random sub-groups dissented on O and Q, while the other sub-groups did not. The men and women agreed closely on all the pamphlets but E and Q. The social science and non-social science students disagreed by more than three tenths of a point upon only B, H, and K. The sub-groups which were

⁷ This inspection is made in Chap V, pp. 140-42.

⁸ See Chap. IV, pp. 92-95.

TABLE IX

Comparison of Sub-Groups with Varied Backgrounds in Respect to Average Preference for Pamphlets, and to Mention of Criteria

A. Difference between contrasted sub-groups' average ranking of each pamphlet in its series of three*

| Pamphlet | Random Halves (45) | Men, Women (45) | Social Science, Non- Science (28) | 2 Years College, Post- graduate (16) | Sum of Difference |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|----------------------|
| Unemployment | | | | | † |
| B | .09 | .09 | .36 | .50 | .95 |
| C | .04 | .12 | .21 | .04 | .37 |
| D | .17 | .04 | .07 | .42 | .53 |
| Peace | | | | | |
| E | .54 | .54 | .21 | .88 | 1.63 |
| F | .45 | .17 | .23 | .29 | .69 |
| G | .00 | .08 | .17 | .63 | .88 |
| Government | | | | | |
| H | .01 | .16 | .75 | 1.05 | 1.96 |
| I | .08 | .00 | .00 | .29 | .29 |
| K | .16 | .17 | .56 | .76 | 1.49 |
| Money | | | | | |
| O | .40 | .12 | .13 | .07 | .32 |
| P | .24 | .07 | .00 | .23 | .30 |
| Q | .51 | .35 | .05 | .14 | .54 |

* Method of deriving difference is illustrated in Table VIII.

† This column contains sum of difference of selected groups in second, third, and fourth columns.

compared on the basis of education disagreed widely on half of the pamphlets; they reached approximately the same conclusion upon only C and O.

The last column in Table IX, part A, telescopes the impression of the other columns to show which pamphlets produced wide and which little variation in opinions. There was least disagreement in rating pamphlet I for preferences, while H induced the widest variation among sub-groups.

In part B of Table IX, the sum of the squared difference between each pair of contrasted groups in part A is given. This is a summary of information discussed in connection with part A. The correla-

TABLE IX (Continued)

B. Correlation between sub-groups for importance of criteria; difference between pamphlet preferences

| Contrasted Groups | Correlation† of Ranked Criteria | Pamphlet Preference Squared Difference‡ |
|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Random halves (22 with 22) .. | .93 | 1.043 |
| Men (33) | .89 | 547 |
| Women (12) | | |
| College 2 or less years (8) | .89 | 3.525 |
| College 5 or more years (8) | | |
| 3 courses in social sciences (15) | .85 | 1.200 |
| 1 or no courses in social sciences (13) | | |

† These data are based upon a comparison of 14 major criteria, as derived from section comments on Pamphlet I.

‡ Explanation of measure is given in Chap. IV, p. 93.

tions between criteria have also been discussed before.⁹ Both columns of information are collected in part B for easy reference.

The crucial question arising out of an examination of Table IX is: Why do the wide differences between choices of pamphlets occur? Are they due to controversial factors within the pamphlets? Are they due to varying difficulty, to methods of presenting material, or to other qualities? Are they perhaps brought about by differences in the past experience and ability of the readers?

It is impossible to carry analysis of the factors which are related to preferences of the sub-groups further until more is known about the qualities of the pamphlets. Methods of analyzing qualities and the knowledge assembled from applying these methods to the twelve experimental pamphlets will be presented in Chapter V. Then the discussion of similarities and differences between the sub-groups contrasted here will be resumed.

The comparison of six types of sub-groups has shown that there is not much difference between the order of their frequency of citing specific reasons for judging materials. There was little more than random difference between their preference for pamphlets, except between the opinions of subjects with less and more education.

The one wide difference found should not lead to the hasty conclusion that the three or more years of schooling separating one group

⁹ See Chap. IV, pp. 91, 97-98.

from the other is the direct cause of the disagreement in pamphlet preference. The members with advanced degrees may have developed a peculiar psychological slant on life, due to their unemployment in spite of superior training. The less schooled sub-group may have obtained experiences in their post-college days that the other group did not have. Neither small group may be representative of undergraduate and postgraduate students at large.

EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS WHICH MIGHT AFFECT OPINIONS

Among the conditions in this experiment which might have some influence upon the readers' estimates of pamphlets were differences among the readers and in the nature of the experimental set-up. The previous section tried to isolate the effect of such elements as differing sex, training, or education upon the evaluations of the readers. Of equal importance to the interpretation of criticisms is the isolation of any factors within the experimental conditions which might have affected judgments. The presence of peculiar experimental conditions which bring peculiar results might invalidate the findings, unless such were taken into account in the interpretation of the data.

The three experimental factors which were studied, in order to find the extent of their influence upon opinions, were the varying degree of interest of the readers in each of the subjects with which the pamphlets dealt, the order of reading three pamphlets compared with the readers' evaluation of them, and the seriousness and thoroughness with which readers carried out the assigned tasks.

The Varying Topics of Pamphlets

The subject of the pamphlets was undoubtedly among the strongest determinants of attitudes toward the literature. This factor was taken into consideration before the experiment began by asking each reader to rank the topics under which the experimental pamphlets were grouped. The reader was told to place the four topics in the order in which he would normally be interested in reading about them, with 1 as most and 4 as least interesting. After reading all the pamphlets, each person was asked to rank the four topics again, this time in the order in which he had enjoyed reading about them. The rankings made before reading were averaged, and so were the rankings made after reading the pamphlets. The averaged ranks follow, in Table X.

According to Table X, most of the group, whose members had little money about which to worry, were definitely uninterested in reading about unstable money before the study. This lack of interest

TABLE X
Interest of Readers in the Experimental Topics

| Topic | Average Rank* Before Reading | Average Rank* After Reading |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Unemployment | 2.30 | 2.23 |
| War and Peace | 2.24 | 2.29 |
| Changing Governments | 2.34 | 2.37 |
| Unstable Money | 3.09 | 3.09 |

* 2.23 is best liked, 3.09 is least liked.

occurred in spite of the facts that four-fifths of the groups said they had taken courses in economics and that the newspapers contained a great deal of discussion about inflation at the time of the experiment. The supposedly well chosen pamphlets did not raise the average interest at all at the end.

The averages in Table X show that the only definite choice among the topics was evinced in the distaste for literature dealing with money. The fluctuations of the other averages were not great enough to be significant, but the relative rankings among the three topics may be considered. Before the experiment began, the members were not quite as much interested in reading about their immediate problem of unemployment as about war and peace. After exposure to some interesting literature, they promoted their own problem to first choice. The dramatic issues involved in the discussion of war and peace were somewhat more appealing to them than was the topic, changing governments, both before and after the experiment. Indeed, the latter topic was given a lower third ranking after the readers' contact with the three pamphlets on the subject.

The element of varying interest in the different topics was held constant to a large extent, since three pamphlets on the same subject were compared only with one another. However, interest in the topic may have operated in a subtler way to determine which of the three pamphlets was best liked. If a reader were familiar with a topic, he might choose one pamphlet; if the topic were new to him, he might prefer another.

This hypothesis was proved in the series on unstable money. The people who were really interested in the topic of money (who checked the topic as interesting and who ranked it one) liked pamphlet Q very much. Q gave a simple, full, clear explanation of the meaning

of inflation. Another group that did not want to read about money (who did not check it, and who rated it four) preferred P, which was an amusing and well written defense of the author's position on stable money. This difference in choice of pamphlets occasioned by a difference in interest in the subject was not found in any other series.

The Order of Reading Pamphlets

The order in which three pamphlets in a series were read might affect the order of preference in either of two ways. The reader might become tired of the subject and tend to like the last pamphlet least. Or the reader's interest might increase as he learned more about the topic, in which case he would rate the last pamphlet as preferable. If the factor of order of reading were too strong, that is to say, if the third pamphlet read was almost always rated least interesting, or most interesting, and the first pamphlet the reverse, the probability would be that the order of reading itself had too great an influence upon the rankings.¹⁰

The order of reading pamphlets and the ranking of the readers' preference for each series were tabulated together. If the supposition of the last paragraph were correct, a disproportionately large per cent of ranking and reading orders would coincide. Actually, only 36% of the ratings and order of reading coincided; 33% of the pamphlets read second or third were rated higher, that is, first or second; 31% of the pamphlets read first or second ranked lower. The distribution of ratings and reading order among coincidence, positive change, and negative change was random. The order of reading had no apparent influence upon ranking for preference.

Care with Which Instructions Were Followed

The last factor considered among those experimental conditions that might influence readers' judgment was the care with which the reading and evaluation of the pamphlets was performed by the experimental readers. The method used in studying this factor was the comparison of one conspicuously conscientious sub-group with another sub-group which was thought to be careless.

The criticisms of four pamphlets, C, G, I, and P, one from each series, were selected for the survey. The "careful" papers for each were separated from the others by the assistant who was most familiar with them. Those were considered carefully written which presented sensible reasons for the ratings, in which the ratings were

¹⁰ The element of fatigue would not influence the group's ratings between series, since the series were read in random order.

spread somewhat over the five-point scale, and for which the instructions were carefully followed. Half or more of the papers of each pamphlet fell under the careful heading.

Ratings and criticisms of the seventeen people who were most careful, i.e., whose papers were selected for all four pamphlets, were compared with responses of fourteen who had no papers selected.

The standards used in judging reading materials were nearly enough the same to give a correlation of .83 between the frequency of criteria for the "careful" and the "careless" sub-groups. The three criteria on which they differed most widely give some clue to the psychology of the "careless" group. The careful readers made more comments about the method of introducing the topic; the "careless" mentioned a great deal more often the way facts were presented, and somewhat more often the emotional appeal of the pamphlet.

A comparison of the section ratings of the four pamphlets made by the two sub-groups revealed the fact that the "careless" group found the pamphlets far less interesting. In a compilation of the ratings of forty-nine sections, only seven, or one-seventh, were rated more interesting by the "careless" group than the median section in interest as judged by the careful group. These data mean that in the eyes of the "careless" sub-group, a very small proportion of sections were interesting; the careful sub-group considered at least half of the sections interesting.

Closer examination of the "careless" papers showed that they fell into four classes. The first class was written by readers who thought the pamphlet too poor to read. As one man in this group expressed it, more dramatically but no more feelingly than the others: "Section 1. Fit for a tabloid mind. Section 2. Very sad, very sad. Section 3. A little better, but not much." His general estimate of the pamphlet was, "This type of article is fit only for person who must have information sugar-coated, who must get information by indirection. Gushy. Blah-human interest!" The critic was not following directions, for he gives very little in the way of information about why he does not like the pamphlet. But he could not be called careless in the usual sense of the word.

A second class was not sufficiently analytical to give reasons that have a value for the study. The members said: "Well presented." "Proven facts." "Personal tinge." "Not clear—too simple." "Demoralizing aspect." It is probable that these represent the type, found in any study group, who are unable to analyze and to introspect for deeper meanings.

A third class, of whom there were only two in the group of forty-five, could be definitely classified as incompetent. Each of them spent some time with us every day as we pointed out errors, made concrete suggestions for improvement, and showed them examples of what we wanted. They could not comply with our directions, though they earnestly attempted to work.

In the papers examined, there was only one which belonged to the fourth group, that of obvious unwillingness to follow instructions. The responses may well have been written without glancing at the pamphlet. They were not consistent, for the section reactions contained such remarks as "Impressively written," "Written in an understandable manner," while on the back of the same paper the general criticism was "Dull. This must have been written for elementary students."

The sub-group that was labeled careless, then, could not in general be rightfully called so. With the exception of a few cases, they might be considered a normal part of any group, including those who are not greatly interested and those who do not have the ability or the will to do the task at hand thoroughly. To remove the opinions of this minority would be to give undue weight to the most interested and intelligent members. Although the so-called "careless" group did influence the results, incorporating their criticisms in the data made the group more nearly normal and did no harm.

The less careful group, which was a minority of the whole group, contributed to the purposes of this study. They helped to secure reasons which clarified the criteria for selecting reading material. This group agreed closely enough with the "careful" group in frequency of mentioning criteria. This less mature group was essential for the determination of the spread of interest in the various pamphlets.

EXPERIMENTATION WITH A CHECK LIST

The pamphlets were submitted to two other widely different groups. Each person in the two groups read only two pamphlets on a single topic. He checked a list of reasons for judging the pamphlets instead of writing out free responses. Handicapped by these limitations, the findings contributed to the field of techniques rather than to the verification of criteria.

The long list of reasons for liking or disliking pamphlets obtained from the Civil Works Administration group was telescoped to a few salient points upon which it was desirable to have information.

The assistance of a class of Negro adults graduating from an eighth grade evening school in Harlem had been proffered. Consultation with their principal and with others who had worked with similar classes indicated that their literacy and comprehension level was not high. Therefore the check list was set up in the simplest manner that could be devised.¹¹ Directions were made very explicit, and each standard was phrased in non-technical words. For instance, A below was the original form and B the changed form:

A. Body: Positive Reasons

1. Topic is of current interest.

* * * * *

B. Things I Like About the Main Part of This Book.

1. People and newspapers are talking about this subject now.

A. Body: Negative Reasons

1. Topic not timely.

B. Things I do not Like About the Main Part of This Book.

1. This subject is too old; nobody talks about it now.

Several experts gave their advice about the form of wording of the check list. Opinions were conflicting about the device of arranging positive and negative reasons parallel to one another on each side of the page. One professor suggested a single statement with +, 0, — checked to indicate variations of opinion, but this seemed too difficult for people not accustomed to dealing with such symbols. Actually, few negatives were marked. The reason for this may have been due to a hesitancy to criticize, as well as to the form of the check list.

In the short time at the reader's disposal, only two pamphlets could be read. Therefore, one was eliminated from each series. The unemployment series lost the popular D because its hundred pages made it too long. F and K, which were removed from the war and the government series, had aroused emotional reactions that made rational analysis difficult. The hardest and least popular, O, was taken from unstable money.

The check lists, with two pamphlets for each student, were taken to Harlem. There the general idea was explained to an earnest audience. Each man was given his choice of any of the four series. They started work, reading the introduction of one pamphlet and checking the reasons relating to the introduction, while two investigators went around helping them, explaining individually the directions which had already been given in writing and orally to the group. Almost half of the group of thirty-three needed assistance in understanding and checking the forms. The class members took the pamphlets home, and the completed check lists were returned

¹¹ See Appendix II C.

in five days. Twenty-three members read and checked both pamphlets. The form which was given to the Harlem group contained no room for general criticisms. Some of the readers either wrote or made verbal comments which were so illuminating that general criticisms were incorporated in the experimental technique. When the check list was used again, the readers were asked to write their general criticism of the pamphlets. These comments disclosed their degree of comprehension of the material and also gave additional insight into their standards of judgment.

A lively suburban group which had grown out of a recreation hour for men was given the material to read and the blanks to check. Their median educational level was two years of college. Fifteen people from this discussion group read two pamphlets each and checked the list without any verbal instructions or aid. They had no difficulty in following directions or in interpreting the check list. Indeed, it had apparently been over-simplified for them, for one man wrote, "I did not check any negatives because they seemed so silly." This comment suggested that the test material as well as the reading must be specifically adapted to the group that is to use it.

The chief purpose of submitting the check list and pamphlets to other groups was to discover which standards were of most importance to different kinds of groups. The frequency of mention of topics by the Civil Works Administration group, which had not been given a check list, was compared with that of Harlem and suburban groups.

The comparison of criteria among the three groups was limited by two factors. First, the quality of format was over-emphasized in the check list. Therefore the Harlem and suburban groups made too frequent comments in comparison with the normal responses of the Civil Works Administration group. Second, the Harlem and suburban groups marked comparatively few negative reactions on the check list. Accordingly, the correlation between the Civil Works Administration and the other groups was restricted to positive standards, exclusive of format. The Harlem and suburban groups were compared only on positive standards; the format was included in their correlation, since the two groups were subjected to the same research instrument. The degree of correlation between the various groups is shown in Table XI, part B.

Part A in Table XI gives the data on the basis of which the negative criticisms were omitted from the correlations. It is evident that abnormally few negative responses were made when the check list

TABLE XI
Comparison Between Three Groups' Judgment of Criteria

| <i>A. Proportion of positive and negative judgments</i> | | | |
|---|-------------------|--|-----------|
| Group | Instrument | Per Cent Responses Which Were Positive | Negative |
| C. W. A. | Section reactions | 54% | 46% |
| Harlem | Check list | 89% | 11% |
| Suburban | Check list | 90% | 10% |
| Suburban | General comments | 74% | 26% |
| <i>B. Correlations between positively stated criteria for three groups*</i> | | | |
| Groups Compared | | Rho | P. E. Rho |
| C. W. A. with Harlem | | .39 | .13 |
| C. W. A. with Suburban | | .40 | .13 |
| Suburban with Harlem | | .81 | .05 |

* Appendix III B contains the data from which the correlations are derived.

was used, if the basis of comparison is the proportion of unfavorable criticisms made when readers were not restricted to a check list. Part B summarizes the correlation between the frequency of checking standards by the various groups. The Harlem and suburban groups attained a high correlation of agreement upon ranking of criteria, .81. The Harlem and Civil Works Administration groups agreed in their frequency of mentioning standards used in judging the same four pamphlets with the correlation of .39. The rank order correlation between the suburban and the Civil Works Administration groups was .40. These correlations, revealing some agreement in frequency of mentioning standards in spite of wide differences in types of the three groups and of their methods of evaluation, suggest that some of the same standards may influence all readers' judgments. However, the artificial exclusion of some of the data tends to invalidate the correlations.

CRITICISMS OF THE TECHNIQUES

During the progress of the experiment a choice frequently had to be made between two research techniques. When the experiment

was completed, there was reason to inquire whether all of the steps taken were necessary to obtain results, whether a fragment of the process was not almost as reliable as the whole process either for setting up standards or for obtaining reactions to definite materials. Since part of the object of this preliminary investigation of the curriculum is to question old methods and to develop new techniques which might be used by practical educators, some of these problems and their solution may be given to the reader.

Method of Classifying Standards

The method of classifying the criteria was questioned several times during the experiment. The most thorough scientific technique is to request a number of judges to make the proper classification of each criticism. This method was believed to be unnecessary in an exploratory study such as the present one; the approximate grouping of criticisms supplied the immediate demand for a defined list of standards. An incomplete classification would act as a spur for further investigation, but would meanwhile be of some guidance to curriculum selection.

The Combined List of Criteria formulated in this study is far from being a complete basis for further studies. The need of a scientifically approved classification which would provide at least the chief divisions under which could be fitted standards for judging *any* kind of adult non-fiction reading still remains. Till we have this classification, results will not be comparable from different investigations upon different subjects. In order to build a scientific classification of criteria, investigators should obtain opinions of readers upon samples in all of the important branches of adult study. A number of people should classify the reasons obtained, under controlled conditions, thus accumulating a consensus of agreement upon categories and classifications.¹² A general guide list of criteria would thus be built which could be used for classifying all reasons given by readers or for eliciting opinions on any type of non-fiction literature.

Relative Merits of General and Section Criticisms

The relative merit of the general criticisms of whole pamphlets compared with the detailed criticism of each section was weighed. Section analyses call for a patience that may not be possessed by all of the volunteer groups who will probably be subjects for most later experiments. On the other hand, the general analysis may not indi-

¹² An exact method of classification was reported in [1], pp. 81-94.

cate weak places in the material, or may not throw exceptionally strong passages into relief. Let us see what evidence may be brought to bear on the problem.

The rank order correlation between the general and the section reactions for all of the pamphlets was .68.¹³ This indicates a more than haphazard relation between the two methods of ranking, and shows that the same criticisms occurred, in proportion, roughly as frequently when general criticisms were made as when detailed comments were given.

This correlation may be interpreted in two ways, depending on the use which is to be made of the data. If an experimenter is merely interested in discovering the standards that his adult class most often uses in choosing its reading, then the gathering of a number of general criticisms will be almost as effective as the request for specific reactions and will save time. As a tool for collecting criteria and for showing their relative importance, general criticisms are valid.

If, on the other hand, the experimenter wants to test the strong and weak points of particular material, he will find a detailed appraisal of the reading—page by page, or chapter by chapter—to be invaluable. He should not dispense with general criticisms, even if specific analyses are carefully worded. The general criticisms emphasize some qualities which were not apparent to the reader in his detailed analysis, and the sectional criticisms mention flaws or virtues which are neglected in a general appraisal.

A related problem, raised often by the readers, was the difficulty and trouble of rating small sections of pamphlets. Specific complaints from the readers referred chiefly to their interruption of an idea in order to evaluate a section. In the future, divisions should be made only with a complete break in the thought at ends of sections or of chapters. Occasionally in material as brief as these pamphlets, the pause in thought does not occur until the end of the book, as attested by one man who wrote, "Its author has entranced me so that I have made very poor decisions about my section comments."

Use of a Check List

The remaining problem to be discussed is one that will confront other investigators of reading materials. Should a check list be provided upon which readers can indicate opinions? Several arguments favor a check list that contains all the main standards for judging reading material. A good check list would be based upon a classification of all the chief standards which a person would ordinarily erect

¹³ See Chap. IV, p. 90 and Appendix III C.

in judging literature. Time would be saved if, instead of writing a full reason, he checked the classification head to which his criticism belonged. Only a few criticisms might occur to him without help.

The arguments opposing the use of a check list are of several kinds. The readers may check indiscriminately, instead of analyzing their own opinions and then checking the phrase that best expresses them. Then, too, the phraseology of a check list may not fully imply reactions that would be obtained in free responses. Further, we ordinarily think in specific terms, whereas a check list is generalized. The Harlemite who liked pamphlet P because it told about cutting off babies' heads in Japan (the passage has not been located) did not check the general reason concerning effective stories and examples. In like manner, most of the comments that one thinks of are specific and must be interpreted for classification in the generalized form. But it may be too much to ask some groups to translate their specific objections into generalized concepts.

Finally, there are the difficulties of setting up an adequate form. The check list must be expressed in terms with which its users are acquainted. Some provision should be made for showing variations in the quality under consideration: plus, zero, minus, or rating on a positive-negative scale, or arrangement of positive and negative qualities in the parallel form utilized here. Then a decision must be reached concerning the extensiveness of the list. If it includes all possible alternatives, the users may be exhausted; and if it is abbreviated, its completeness and often its clarity may be sacrificed.

The most satisfactory compromise, we believe, is a guide to criticism such as that presented in Table II. It overcomes some of the objections raised to the check list, but incorporates its advantages.

The recommended guide is based upon all of the main standards of evaluation found in this experiment. If the guide requires readers to write responses, it is difficult for them to escape making a discriminating analysis. The guide presents an opportunity for citing specific criticisms under general topics. It forces readers to express positive or negative opinions in the course of evaluating each topic. The check may be as extensive or as short as the expressive ability of the judge. Finally, in case any points were omitted from the guide, the reader may write them in his general criticism. While the form presented in Chapter III requires more analysis of the returns by the investigator than a simple check list would, the readers would have made so many more significant responses that the extra work by the experimenter would be amply justified.

SUMMARY

After reading a number of books on adult education and talking to professional writers, publishers, and educators, it was apparent to the writer that no well defined methods for determining the reading matter that would be successful with adult study groups were available. No experimental work was recorded in which ordinary readers made a detailed analysis of the standards that guided them in their attitudes toward reading. Accordingly, an experiment of this nature was made.

A group of adults who were assembled for experimental purposes read pamphlets upon current controversial topics and wrote reasons for liking or disliking the literature. In order to discover the criteria used by the readers as they evaluated the literature, their criticisms were classified. Thirty-eight topics, under fourteen major heads, were organized from the criticisms into the Combined List of Criteria. The Combined List was compiled from four sources: the opinions of experts regarding standards which are used in selecting literature, the general criticisms of pamphlets by the experimental readers, the detailed section reactions and the reasons for snap judgment of pamphlets, both of which were likewise written by the readers. It was refined to show the relative importance of the various criteria: the frequency with which each criterion was mentioned provided the basis for grouping it in one of four quarters of importance.

In addition to discovering the standards used by readers in evaluating the pamphlets, some characteristics of the experimental group were analyzed. The analysis took the form, first, of studying the preferences of the whole group and the reasons that they gave for their preferences. Then the preferences and reasons of sub-groups were inspected.

The relative interest that members expressed in the various pamphlets was shown by a Pamphlet Preference Index, which was composed of averaged ratings of the pamphlets and of sections of pamphlets. In order to simplify correlations, the criticisms of the material were listed under the fourteen major standards in their order of importance; the criticisms of the pamphlets in general were contrasted with the criticisms of sections of the pamphlets.

Certain important facts about the experimental group obtained from a questionnaire formed the basis for selecting sub-groups to study the respects in which they were similar to or different from one another. Men's tastes were so much like women's that very little difference was seen in either their ranking of criteria for importance

or their ranking of pamphlets for preference. Likewise, the members who had taken social science courses akin to the material of the pamphlets showed no more than random differences on either score from members who had not pursued such courses. While the eight members who had been to college for two years or less agreed in their ranking of criteria with the eight who possessed postgraduate degrees, they disagreed widely on pamphlet preference.

Three factors inherent in the experimental set-up, the interest in contents of pamphlets, the order of reading, and the care with which instructions were followed, were examined for their influence upon results. The first factor to be studied was the topics about which pamphlets were written. The topics were found to produce a difference in interest which must be taken into account in examining preferences for single pamphlets. Second, the order in which pamphlets were read had no observable influence upon the order in which pamphlets were preferred. Third, when a group of "careful" readers was compared with a "careless" group, it was found that while the two sub-groups used approximately the same standards in judging the pamphlets, the "careful" group liked the four pamphlets that were analyzed much better than the "careless" group did. No ground was found for assuming that almost all of the group was not making a conscientious appraisal of the experimental literature.

Some of the techniques developed in this study were evaluated; the following suggestions for their improvement were made. First, while the list of criteria assembled here may be used as a guide to selection of curriculum materials, a list based upon other fields than current social problems should be prepared eventually for the use of leaders and research workers. Second, detailed as well as general criticisms of experimental literature should ordinarily be employed when the literature is being tested. Third, although the use of a check list or guide to reader criticisms presents some difficulty, an aid to criticisms such as that suggested in Chapter III should be used.

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CHAPTER V

THE EXPERIMENTAL READING MATERIALS

REACTIONS to literature are based chiefly upon two factors: the character of the reader and the nature of the literature. In Chapter IV the character of the experimental group was investigated. Differences and similarities in the tastes of men and women, of college non-graduates and post-graduates, and of students trained and untrained in social sciences were pointed out. The next step is the analysis of the nature of the experimental pamphlets. There are a number of qualities within the pamphlets which may have influenced readers' reactions. These qualities will be presented in order to indicate the form in which they existed in each pamphlet. The comparison of this objective information with expressed preferences of the experimental readers for the pamphlets will show the requirements for literature that were set by these readers.

Eight qualities of the pamphlets were analyzed by from two to six assistants, who were selected for this purpose from the larger group of Civil Works Administration members. Then readers' preferences and criticisms of the pamphlets were studied. The bodies of information about readers' preferences and the quality of the reading matter were combined in a search for the criteria upon which preferences were based. The methods included in studying the pamphlets and their effect on readers will be recounted in sufficient detail to permit other investigators to duplicate them.

LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF PAMPHLETS

Content

One of the factors in a book that has most influence upon readers' opinions undoubtedly is its content. What the author discusses is generally the single greatest factor producing interest or lack of it in the reader. Therefore, the starting point for analysis of any material is consideration of its content.

Two or three assistants summarized the contents of each of the twelve pamphlets in short sketches of four to a dozen lines. The sketches were combined to form the basis for the presentation of

content that is given in Appendix III E and illustrated for two pamphlets later in this chapter.

Techniques of Relating Subject to Reader

The opinions of readers may be influenced not only by what the author is talking about but by his style of telling it. A descriptive method was used in discovering those factors in the pamphlets that readers called "human interest." With the following outline as a guide, each pamphlet was described by two or three assistants.

1. Sketch the content of the pamphlet briefly.
2. What techniques does the author use to catch and hold reader interest?
3. Does he seem to have one group of readers especially in mind as he writes?

The interesting and varied devices which were used in the twelve experimental pamphlets are classified in Chapter VI.¹ The discovered techniques for relating a subject to the reader fit under heads of twelve of the fourteen chief criteria, showing that readers' attention may be arrested by the skillful introduction of almost any of the qualities. Techniques obviously utilized to interest the reader were dialogue, dramatization, analogies, and pictures. Emotionalized language was employed, as was the opposite method of a scholarly style. A full presentation of facts, with adequate definition and explanation, was just as powerful in holding the interest of readers as were the more commonly conceived devices. The methods employed by the author of each pamphlet are given in Appendix III E. A detailed statement of "human interest techniques" is made illustratively for pamphlets D and O in this chapter.

Difficulty

Since the method utilized by Gray and Leary [4]* to determine the difficulty of books for adults was not available when the pamphlet analysis was in process, the Winnetka formula [8] for determining the grade placement of books for children was used. With the aid of the *Winnetka Chart for Determining Grade Placement of Children's Books*, printed by the Winnetka Public Schools, a sample of one thousand words from each pamphlet was tabulated. The first fifteen hundred words in difficulty (according to the Thorndike Word List [7] and certain other counts) were printed on the chart, with spaces for entering "uncommon" words alphabetically at the

¹ See Chap. VI, p. 193 and also Appendix III D.

* Throughout this chapter numbers in brackets refer to bibliographical references to Chapter V, as given on page 159.

right. A sample of seventy-five sentences was classified as "simple" or "not simple" according to stated rules.

All measures were combined in a formula which had as its elements (1) the total number of different words in a thousand, (2) the proportion of those words that are less common than the first fifteen hundred in frequency, (3) the ratio of simple to complex sentences, and (4) a statistical constant that had been found to aid in grade placement. The end product stated the school grade in which the book could be used to best advantage. Although the present study was not concerned with grade placement, the formula permitted the determination of the relative difficulty of books, and the chart was a convenient device for performing the first step in an analysis of difficulty, that of taking a sampling of words.

TABLE XII
Ranking of Pamphlets for Difficulty on the Basis of the
Winnetka Formula

| Pamphlet | Winnetka Formula Grade Placement | Difficulty Index Rank |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Unemployment | | |
| B | 9.4 | 3 |
| C | 6.3 | 11 |
| D | 8.2 | 5 |
| Peace | | |
| E | 6.6 | 10 |
| F | 10.4 | 1 |
| G | 8.1 | 6 |
| Government | | |
| H | 5.5 | 12 |
| I | 7.8 | 7 |
| K | 8.5 | 4 |
| Money | | |
| O | 6.7 | 9 |
| P | 6.8 | 8 |
| Q | 9.7 | 2 |

Table XII states the grade placement of each of the pamphlets according to the Winnetka formula. It can be seen that none of the pamphlets is regarded as difficult reading; only one is difficult enough to rank in senior high school, and one, H, ranks in the fifth grade. Each series contains one pamphlet ranking in the most difficult third,

one in the central third, and one in the easiest third. When the pamphlets were chosen, there was some attempt to obtain a distribution of difficulty in each series, but the success of judging the distribution of difficulty among the series was unexpected.

Difficulty of vocabulary and complexity of sentence structure do not necessarily constitute difficulty of reading materials, especially for adults. This conclusion is borne out by the fact that although Dale and Tyler [3] found that elements similar to those in the Winnetka formula—number of different non-technical words, number of hard non-technical words, and number of indeterminant clauses—correlated with general tests of difficulty more closely than any other of several factors studied, the correlation which they obtained for these three combined factors was only .51. Gray and Leary [4, p. 138] found a somewhat higher correlation for difficulty scores and these five elements: the number of different hard words, the number of first, second, and third person pronouns, the average sentence length in words, the percentage of different words, and the number of prepositional phrases found in a sample passage of 100 words. Their correlation between a predicted average reading score and the five elements was .64.

There are other factors involved in difficulty which have not been discovered by either formula. Such elements may be the clarity of sentence structure, or the skill with which sentences and paragraphs are woven into a unified sequence, or the limitation upon the number of concepts outside the range of the particular readers. These additional elements may be impossible to isolate for purposes of scientific study; certainly they have not lent themselves to analysis to date.

The probability that difficulty for mature readers includes important factors other than vocabulary is indicated by the fact that the readers in this experiment mentioned general difficulty of concepts, such as "subject well defined," "too hard to read," "non-technical," "easy style," etc., often enough to place that quality in the first quarter of important criteria.² Difficulty of terms, on the other hand, such as "good definition of words," "do not understand many terms," etc., was mentioned so rarely that it fell in the third quarter. Another indication of a broader definition of difficulty is the failure of readers to rank the pamphlets for difficulty in the same order as the Difficulty Index (see page 117).

For the present, however, the most practical determination of reading difficulty that can be made in advance of reader criticism is through the analysis of various mechanical aspects of the printed

² See Table V, p. 82.

word with the Winnetka or the University of Chicago formula. The latter provides a reasonably accurate key to the difficulty of books for students of limited reading ability.

Historical Allusions

One of the factors that sometimes causes people to become biased for or against books is the presence of historical allusions. Historical references were described for each of the twelve pamphlets, and the comparative quantities were correlated with preferences.

Four assistants followed these directions in analyzing the pamphlets for *historical allusions*:

Take a pamphlet, and list every section that contains historical data. "Historical" applies to anything that occurred prior to the Roosevelt administration. (The study was made in April, 1934.) Classify the material according to the following outline:

1. Is it used to provide a *background* for understanding the author's position, or as an *introduction*?
2. Is it used to *illustrate* a point?
3. Is it used for *comparative* purposes, with several instances cited in reference to one another?
4. Other reasons.

The most helpful analysis was made by an assistant who amplified the instructions by adding a short descriptive phrase after each classification, as "Background—history of Muscle Shoals struggle."

Two assistants analyzed the quality of history in one pamphlet and three studied the remaining eleven. Each placed a check mark beside the number of every section containing history. The checks of the two or three workers coincided for seventy-four per cent of the sections. Seventy-six per cent of all sections checked by the workers as containing history were considered, after consistent and rigid examination by the author, to have historical allusions.

The author's opinion, influenced by that of the two or three assistants, was the basis for the preparation of a scale of quantity of history present in the twelve pamphlets. The number of lines of history in each section judged by the assistants to contain history were counted and added to find the total number of lines of history in the pamphlet. The proportion of lines with history to the total estimated lines in the pamphlets provided an index figure which could be ranked with the indexes of other pamphlets. The resulting scale runs from a pamphlet with 11 lines of history, ranking first, to one with 495 lines, ranking twelfth. The ranks follow, in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

Ranking of Pamphlets by Proportion of Space Given to History

| Pamphlet | Estimated Total Number of Lines | Counted Lines of History | Proportion of Lines of History to Total | Rank |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------|
| Unemployment | | | % | |
| B | 1102 | 42 | 3.8 | 10 |
| C | 884 | 17 | 1.9 | 11 |
| D | 2592 | 195 | 7.5 | 8 |
| Peace | | | | |
| E | 570 | 168 | 29.3 | 2 |
| F | 1416 | 11 | .8 | 12 |
| G | 700 | 68 | 9.7 | 6 |
| Government | | | | |
| H | 560 | 35 | 6.4 | 9 |
| I | 1020 | 95 | 9.3 | 7 |
| K | 1122 | 155 | 13.8 | 5 |
| Money | | | | |
| O | 703 | 126 | 17.9 | 3 |
| P | 768 | 114 | 14.8 | 4 |
| Q | 1363 | 495 | 36.2 | 1 |

There was little evident relationship between the length of the pamphlet and the amount of history included in it. The one with the fewest lines of history, F, was next to the longest. The longest pamphlet, D, ranked eighth with a ratio of 7.5 lines of history.

Some relationship between the content of the pamphlet and the amount of history was visible. Comparatively little historical background was provided in the discussions of unemployment, since pamphlets B and C were chiefly concerned with steps taken under the Roosevelt administration, and D introduced history only for illustration. Most of the historical evidence was introduced in the three discussions of inflation. In the series on peace there was more variation: pamphlet F resorted to exhortation, but G introduced some historical data, and E was full of illustrations drawn from previous wars.

Presentation of Figures

The fact is scarcely debatable that the presence of figures, tables, or graphs in written material has an effect upon the attitude of many readers. Some declare that they ignore all tables, whatever their

import; others prefer concise listing of figures to generalized statements. Authors are aware of reader prejudices for or against presentation of statistical data and use various devices to overcome the prejudices.

The amount of statistical data in each pamphlet was compared with reader preferences. The different methods used by authors in handling facts were described. The directions for discovering occurrences and types of figures, which were given to the assistants, follow:

List the section and page on which figures are found. Make a note of every occurrence of figures and written numbers except dates. State whether they are presented:

1. In tables
2. By graphs (see guide sheet)
3. In running account, or context
4. With dramatic or human application

To insure uniformity in describing the graphs, a copy of a dozen common graphic forms with their labels was made.[6] Each assistant compared every graph with this standard copy.

The expression, "In tables," was used to include all figures in tabular or column style. "In running account" pertained to figures, either spelled or numerical, which were included in paragraphs in the context. The "dramatic application" of figures to common experience was separated from the other contextual explanations in order to estimate whether it was as well liked a technique as its sponsors declare it to be. A sample of dramatic application is:

. . . (The member bank of the Federal Reserve) does precisely what John Smith would do if, short of cash, he went to the bank and drew out \$25 of his deposits in currency. . . . If, when he goes to draw out his \$25, John Smith is told that he has not that much on deposit, what does he do? . . . If he is a business man with sufficient standing, he borrows \$100 on his note. . . . It is precisely the same with the member bank. . . .", etc. [2, p. 9]

Such examples are common throughout these pamphlets.

Either two or three assistants recorded each page that contained figures in the pamphlets. They agreed upon sixty-seven per cent of the instances of occurrence of figures. The author examined the pamphlets in the light of the previous judgments, and ranked them according to the proportion of pages containing statistics. The ranks are given in Table XIV.

On the average, more statistics were used in the expositions con-

TABLE XIV.

Ranking of Pamphlets by Proportion of Space Given to Figures

| Pamphlet | Number Pages in Pamphlet | Number Pages with Figures | Proportion Figures to Total | Rank of Proportion of Figures |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Unemployment | | | % | |
| B | 29 | 25 | 86 | 3 |
| C | 26 | 11 | 42 | 8 |
| D | 96 | 58 | 60 | 5 |
| Peace | | | | |
| E | 19 | 16 | 84 | 4 |
| F | 59 | 0 | 00 | 11.5 |
| G | 20 | 6 | 30 | 9 |
| Government | | | | |
| H | 16 | 0 | 00 | 11.5 |
| I | 30 | 15 | 50 | 6 |
| K | 34 | 15 | 44 | 7 |
| Money | | | | |
| O | 19 | 18 | 95 | 1 |
| P | 24 | 5 | 21 | 10 |
| Q | 29 | 26 | 89 | 2 |

cerning unemployment and unstable money than in the other two series of pamphlets. This was not always true: on the one side, inflation was discussed without many figures in P; and on the other side, when the cost of war was examined in E, graphs, figures, and tables were essential.

No recognition was given in this count to the amount of figures on a single page. Practically, the ranking for quantity was more accurate than this apparent oversight would allow one to suppose. When figures were presented on ninety-five per cent of the pages of a pamphlet, the discussion was necessarily statistical. Authors who introduced figures frequently were facile in their use of graphs, tables, and running comments. When figures occurred on less than fifty per cent of the pages, as was the case in half of the twelve pamphlets, a sprinkling of figures interspersed through the context was the general rule. Among the pamphlets with less than fifty per cent of figures the number of figures on any one page in pamphlets ranking in popularity six through twelve was small; and the figures were in the context with two exceptions. Pamphlet K had one two-line table, and C had two simple graphs.

Presentation of Controversial Issues

It is assumed that in discussing almost any current issue there is more than one position to be taken. This assumption is made not only by theorists but also by the experimental readers. The readers often expressed themselves as "waiting for the catch," or as interested in trying to detect the author's "frame of reference." Their responses to the author's position, stated or unstated, colored to some extent all of their other reactions. It is our belief that the problem of adjustment between the bias of the reader and of the author is a major factor influencing judgments upon controversial literature. The word bias is used here in a psychological sense, to place emphasis upon the fact that every person has his inclinations and viewpoint. Each pamphlet was examined for the author's bias by three assistants and the writer, in order to determine the author's method of expressing his viewpoint. One of the assistants (g)^{*} was an intelligent man of volatile temperament, who disagreed with all comers and therefore could isolate prejudices of others. Another man (s) recognized the tricks of salesmanship after years of selling experience. The third (h) was working for an advanced degree in social science.

These three assistants considered each pamphlet in turn, deciding which one of four descriptions of bias best characterized the author of that pamphlet. The types of bias exemplified when an author dealt with controversial issues were:

1. The author presented equal facts and arguments upon all sides of the issue. (Impartial)
2. The author gave facts on all sides but indicated why he favored one side. (Fair partisan)
3. The author presented his own view in the best light without indicating alternatives. (Salesman)
4. The author painted only the defects of other positions and showed only the good points of his own views. (Prejudiced partisan)

In the following table, XV, x represents the present writer's judgment of the bias of each pamphlet, derived first from independent judgment and then from consideration of the opinions of the other three judges. The agreement of the raters upon the types of bias of the pamphlets was close. Table XV shows the stand taken by each. In two-thirds of the pamphlets, raters either agreed upon the same type of bias or were one position removed. C was the only pamphlet on which there was a four-position disagreement.

^{*} The letters serve to identify the assistants in Table XV.

TABLE XV

Judgment of Four Assistants Concerning Author's Method of Presenting
Controversial Subjects

| Pamphlet | Author's Position * in Dealing with Controversy Was. | | | |
|--------------|--|---------|-------------|---------------|
| | 1. Impartial | 2. Fair | 3. Salesman | 4. Prejudiced |
| Unemployment | | | | |
| B | x h g s | . . . | . . . | . . . |
| C | x h s | . . | . . . | g |
| D | . . . | x h g s | . . . | . . . |
| Peace | | | | |
| E | h s | x g | . . . | . . . |
| F | . . . | . . . | s | x h g |
| G | . . . | h | s | x g |
| Government | | | | |
| H | g | h | x s | . . . |
| I | x h g s | . . . | . . | . . . |
| K | . . | . . . | s | x h g |
| Money | | | | |
| O | x h g s | . . . | . . | . . . |
| P | . . | x h | s g | . . . |
| Q | s g | . . . | x h | . . . |

* The positions are stated in full on p. 123.

h, g, s = three judges

x final position, assigned by fourth judge.

In assigning pamphlets to types of bias, it was necessary to consider the probable intent of the author as evidenced in his writing and to determine his general method of dealing with issues. There was some overlapping of types of bias in almost every pamphlet. An example of mingled types to which readers objected was contained in pamphlet I. There Socialism, Fascism, and Communism were discussed with fair presentations of the strength and weakness of each economic system. The author of I was criticized by the readers for her partiality in the last section, which ended with the sentence, "Given such an opportunity, American workers would not be tempted by Communism, Fascism, or even Socialism. The New Capitalism would make America a better place in which to live." In spite of this statement which fit the definition of a fair partisan, pamphlet I was assigned to an impartial position because of the author's critical survey of the three economic systems.

In subsequent encounters with the quality of pamphlet here called

"type of bias," the third position of "salesman" seemed to overlap with the second and fourth positions, and was omitted. Since it was impossible to reallocate the judgments of the assistants, the third position was included in this presentation. The revised method of judging three rather than four types of bias is defined in Chapter VI, page 196.

Format

Two assistants followed this outline in describing the format of each pamphlet:

1. Cover
 - a. Color of background and of type
 - b. Decoration
 - c. Size of book
2. Quality of paper
 - a. Texture
 - b. Color
3. Type
 - a. Size and leading
 - b. Opinion on legibility
 - c. Changes in size for emphasis or headings
4. Sections
 - a. Number of editorial sections
 - b. Average length and variation in length
 - c. Interest of captions
 - d. Method of treating quotations
5. Number of pages in pamphlet

The size of type was determined by a person who had had experience in printing. She compared samples from each pamphlet with a complete style book of type size and leading.

The description of *format* was utilized in several instances. Examples of its use are given when two pamphlets are discussed in full later in this chapter, and again when standards are presented in the sixth chapter.

If the experimental books remain available to the investigator, then an elaborate description of the kind indicated above is unnecessary. Some description, however, is serviceable in later phases of the investigation, when the relationship between preference and a number of factors is being sought. Information that cannot be obtained by looking at the books, and that might therefore be recorded in a description of *format*, is, size of type, area of book, number and length of sections.

Literary Quality

As described in Chapter III (page 47) the attempt to rank the pamphlets, even as few as three at a time, on literary quality was unsuccessful. A list of possible components of literary quality was prepared by the assistants, but it seemed to be irrelevant to their judgments. The four assistants did not agree on their ranking of a single pamphlet. In two-thirds of the instances (eight pamphlets) the same book in a series of three was ranked 1, 2, and 3 in literary quality by the judges.

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP'S ANALYSIS OF PAMPHLETS

The twelve experimental pamphlets were analyzed objectively by assistants in the manner just described. Some idea of their content, their literary quality, their appearance, and their methods of approaching the reader's interests was obtained. Scales or numerical descriptions were established for difficulty, quantity of figures, quantity of history, and presentation of controversial subjects.

Reader criticisms supplied another method of learning about the experimental reading matter. In most instances, the forty-five readers were not asked to make the same type of objective analysis as the assistants. The methods of analysis that the experimental group did use will be briefly rehearsed to refresh the reader's memory.

Each member decided which of the three pamphlets he would like most to read and stated the reasons. This was termed snap judgment. He read the selected pamphlet and wrote a general criticism of it. Then he read it slowly, rating each section on a five-point scale, and giving his reason for the rating. After he had analyzed the three pamphlets in a series in this fashion, he ranked them in the order in which he liked them. He also ranked the three on six different qualities, the only analysis of the quality of the material required of readers in the entire experiment.

The value of the general and section criticisms, both for indicating standards and for helping the investigator to form opinions about specific literature, has been presented before.⁴ The utilization of the different ratings for interest were discussed when the Preference Index was given⁵ and later when the reactions of sub-groups were analyzed.⁶ The aspects of the readers' analysis of pamphlets which

⁴ See Chap. IV, pp. 110.

⁵ See Chap. IV, pp. 83.

⁶ See Chap. IV, pp. 99-102.

remain to be discussed are first, their snap judgments and second, their ratings of qualities of the pamphlets.

Snap Judgment

We have already shown that there was little shift in the average ranking by the group of the four major *topics* with which the pamphlets were concerned.⁷ What relation is there between prejudgments of *pamphlets* that have been briefly examined and opinions after careful reading of them?

Out of a total of 228, twenty different reasons were given by the readers for preferring to read given pamphlets first. The reasons were classified under the Combined List of Criteria. The table in Appendix I B provides a concise impression of the outstanding features of the pamphlets which were cited before reading them.

The five principal reasons for rating a pamphlet as appearing most interesting were:

1. Good title
2. Familiar author or editor
3. Interesting looking content
4. Attractive cover or frontispiece
5. Comprehensive, instructive appearance

The snap judgment rank of a pamphlet within a series gave an indication of its general attractiveness. The rank after reading showed whether the preliminary judgment was justified. Table XVI discloses the fact that, according to group averages, the pamphlets which appeared to be most interesting beforehand proved to be so after reading. Within the series on unemployment and on money, the ranks before and after reading were identical. The proportion changed somewhat for peace and for government.

The most significant change between snap and final preference was that for pamphlet F. It had been well advertised and therefore excited so much interest that twenty-three, or seventy per cent, of the experimental subjects who voted wished to read it first. It either was disappointing, or it was overbalanced by the other two pamphlets on peace, for only thirty-nine per cent ranked it most interesting after reading all three.

The column in Table XVI showing the number of coincidences between individuals who read pamphlets first, and therefore presumably preferred them in snap judgment, and ranked them first at the end, is surprising when the agreement between the snap choice

⁷ See Chap. IV, pp. 102-04.

TABLE XVI

Relation between Snap Judgment Preference before Reading and Final Preference after Reading Three Pamphlets

| Pamphlet | Number of First Choices Within Each Series of Three | | | Preference Rank | |
|--------------|---|---------|---------------|-----------------|-------|
| | Snap * | Final † | Coincidence ‡ | Snap | Final |
| Unemployment | | | | | |
| B | 6 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| C | 13 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| D | 19 | 21 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Peace | | | | | |
| E | 5 | 13 | — | 2.5 | 1.5 |
| F | 23 | 13 | — | 1 | 1.5 |
| G | 5 | 7 | 4 | 2.5 | 3 |
| Government | | | | | |
| H | 9 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| I | 19 | 15 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| K | 14 | 17 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Money | | | | | |
| O | 8 | 7 | — | 3 | 3 |
| P | 16 | 17 | — | 1 | 1 |
| Q | 14 | 14 | — | 2 | 2 |

* Preferred before reading series.

† Preferred after reading series.

‡ Rated most interesting by same reader before and after reading (14% of all votes for 7 pamphlets coincided).

and later preference expressed by the group is recalled. Seven pamphlets were examined for coincidence of rating; only fourteen per cent of the readers agreed on first choice before and after. If the findings at this point are valid, snap judgment provided a good clue to the way the group would finally vote, but was no indication of individual consistency.

Reader Ranking on Six Descriptive Qualities

As a last step in their comparison of pamphlets, readers were asked to use their best judgment in ranking a series of three for the following six qualities: attractiveness in appearance, explanation of numbers, quality of writing, simplicity, quality of explanations, and relation to personal problems. The interesting results are given in Table XVII.

TABLE XVII
Mean Reader Ranking of Pamphlets on Six Qualities

| Points of Comparison | Unemployment | | | War and Peace | | | Government | | | Money | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---|---|---------------|-----|-----|------------|---|-----|-------|---|---|---|
| | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | K | O | P | Q | |
| Attractive looking .. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1.5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Numbers explained .. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 1.5 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Well written ... | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | |
| Easily understood .. | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
| Good explanations .. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | |
| Touches personal problems .. | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 1.5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Preference .. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | |

1 indicates best in each quality.

3 indicates poorest in each quality.

The averages upon which these ranks are based are in Appendix III E.

The rankings were apparently made in good faith, for they correspond with known facts about the pamphlets. The general judgment of like or dislike for the pamphlet apparently did not blind readers to good or bad qualities; no pamphlets had the same mean ranking on all factors. On the other hand, some of the six qualities evidently were significant determinants of preference, since the reader ranks of the qualities often coincided with the rankings for preference. Three or more of the six ranks were the same as the preference rank for five of the pamphlets, E, I, O, P, and Q.

How does a reader's interest in content influence the other standards that he employs in judging a pamphlet? We have been searching for an answer to this question in many directions. These data provide one sort of answer. The interest in the topic of unstable money was low; pamphlet P made a good use of many of the techniques for catching reader interest as rated by the readers, and was best liked in the series. The ranks for preference for the other two pamphlets on money likewise followed the majority of rankings on six qualities. But when interest in a topic was great, the favorite pamphlet seemed to have been determined, not by the superficial qualities on which readers ranked it but by the way in which it answered the questions and fulfilled the need of the readers. In the popular series on unemployment the favorite pamphlet, D, ranked low in three aspects and high in only two. Pamphlet G, in the series on peace, likewise ranked lowest in three of six aspects.

These were evidently liked in spite of their relatively unattractive appearance and their greater difficulty.

A reasonable hypothesis is that on the average and for materials of doubtful interest value, effort should be concentrated upon utilizing all of the devices for attracting and holding readers. But when readers are known to be deeply interested in the content of a book, less attention is necessary to details of presentation. Of course, deep interest is so rarely present that the search must be continued for methods of making ordinary reading matter appealing.

Comparison of each of the preference ranks with the six qualities shows that only one of the six bases for reader rating closely paralleled preference ranks.

TABLE XVIII
Comparison of Reader Ranks for Preference and for Quality of
Explanation

| Pamphlet | Preference Rank * | Explanation Rank † |
|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Unemployment | | |
| B | 3 | 3 |
| C | 2 | 2 |
| D | 1 | 1 |
| Peace | | |
| E | 3 | 3 |
| F | 2 | 1.5 |
| G | 1 | 1.5 |
| Government | | |
| H | 3 | 2 |
| I | 1 | 1 |
| K | 2 | 3 |
| Money | | |
| O | 3 | 3 |
| P | 1 | 1 |
| Q | 2 | 2 |

* 1 is most popular. † 1 has best explanation.

In Table XVIII three-fourths of the ranks of the pamphlets for preference and for quality of explanation coincided; none of the remaining fourth was reversed. Readers evidently believed that the manner in which explanations were made influenced their attitude toward pamphlets.

Although each of the six qualities analyzed by the readers deals with an area investigated in the laboratory by judges, the only one which may be directly compared with the objectively determined information is difficulty. The readers ranked each pamphlet in its series on whether it was easily understood. A comparable Difficulty Index was secured by the Winnetka formula.

TABLE XIX

Comparison of Two Different Methods of Ranking for Difficulty

| Pamphlet | Ranked by Readers "Easily Understood" | Ranked by Formula "Difficulty Index" |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Unemployment | | |
| B | 2 | 1 † |
| C | 1 * | 3 |
| D | 3 | 2 |
| Peace | | |
| E | 1 | 3 |
| F | 2 | 1 |
| G | 3 | 2 |
| Government | | |
| H | 1 | 3 |
| I | 2 | 2 |
| K | 3 | 1 |
| Money | | |
| O | 2 | 3 |
| P | 1 | 2 |
| Q | 3 | 1 |

* 1 is easiest. † 1 is hardest.

Table XIX shows that readers spotted the pamphlets with the easiest vocabulary in three out of four series. In two of the four series their opinion of the most difficult pamphlet coincided with the formula estimate. They ranked pamphlets differently from the formula in half of the cases. This difference in ranking is interesting because in one instance⁸ opinions of difficulty expressed by readers seemed to correspond with their preferences better than the vocabulary and sentence computation did. Some of the factors named earlier in this chapter, such as complexity of concepts, use of abstract terms, or awkward presentation of data may have contributed to the different definition of difficulty upon which reader rankings were partially based.

⁸ See Chap. V, pp. 138f.

The procedure of asking readers to rank several comparable pamphlets upon significant qualities was of particular value. The ratings, which were apparently made carefully, helped to validate some findings obtained in the laboratory examinations and to provide a basis for questioning other findings.

While future curriculum research workers should not abandon objective laboratory investigations of the nature of materials, readers should be asked to collaborate in helping to determine their nature. Ranks by readers are preferable to reader comments in this phase of the experiment because the readers must establish a scale as they rank the material. This scale then helps to locate the degree of a quality that is present in a selected book. For example, readers ranked the pamphlets in the unemployment series in this order of quality of explanations: 1-D, 2-C, and 3-B. The degree of explanation in each of those pamphlets may tentatively be called good explanation in D, average in C, and poor in B. Although these degrees need to be checked by other techniques, they may in turn be used to verify other methods of estimating the quality of explanation.

STANDARDS USED BY THE GROUP IN JUDGING EXPERIMENTAL PAMPHLETS

Judges, who were assistants chosen from the experimental group, examined the twelve pamphlets in the light of eight standards. It was possible to assign some sort of numerical value to four of the qualities possessed by the pamphlets. Twelve degrees of difficulty, eleven degrees of quantity of figures, and twelve degrees of quantity of history were discovered in the twelve pamphlets. Four methods of presenting controversial issues were differentiated.

The forty-five members of the group passed judgment on the pamphlets when they criticized them, and again when they indicated rank orders of preference for them. The readers' comments will now be brought to focus upon the known quality of the material in order to see at what points the requirements of their standards are indicated.

The laboratory analysis of pamphlets just described established quantitative scales for four criteria, running from largest to smallest amount of the particular quality within the pamphlets. For instance, the pamphlets were ranked on difficulty from 1 to 12, hardest to easiest.

Did the group appear to like particular degrees of those qualities better than other degrees? Was there any relationship between

preference and increasing difficulty, quantity of history, quantity of figures, or bias? The answer to these questions, stated briefly, is that (a) there was a tendency to dislike the easiest pamphlets and to approve the pamphlets that were median in difficulty; (b) there was a correlation between preference and lessening amount of history; (c) there was a correlation between preference and lessening amount of figures; and (d) readers appeared to prefer pamphlets in which authors definitely stated and maintained a single position. These statements will be discussed in more detail.

In order to give a quick résumé of the findings of the preceding sections and to form a basis for further comparisons, the various laboratory analyses of pamphlets are brought together below in Table XX.

TABLE XX
Comparison of Preference and Four Qualities of Pamphlets

| Pamphlet | Difficulty Index | Quantity of History | Quantity of Figures | Type of Bias | Preference Index |
|--------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Unemployment | | | | | |
| B | 3 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 9 |
| C | 11 | 11 | 8 | 1 | 3.5 |
| D | 5 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 1.5 |
| Peace | | | | | |
| E | 10 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 11 |
| F | 1 | 12 | 11.5 | 4 | 5 |
| G | 6 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 1.5 |
| Government | | | | | |
| H | 12 | 9 | 11.5 | 3 | 8 |
| I | 7 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 6 |
| K | 4 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| Money | | | | | |
| O | 9 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 12 |
| P | 8 | 4 | 10 | 2 | 3.5 |
| Q | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 |

| <i>Relation between qualities</i> | | <i>Relation between qualities and preference</i> | |
|-----------------------------------|------|--|-------|
| | rho | | rho |
| History and difficulty . . | +.03 | Preference and difficulty . | +.09 |
| History and figures . . | +.44 | Preference and history . . . | - .46 |
| Difficulty and figures . . . | +.16 | Preference and figures . . . | - .59 |

The correlations between pairs of qualities in Table XX show the extent to which they were interdependent in the pamphlets. No relationship was discovered between difficulty and quantity of history. There was little relation between quantity of figures and vocabulary difficulty; the rank order correlation was .16. The quantity of history in pamphlets tended to increase in direct proportion with quantity of figures; rho equalled .44. The rest of the table will be discussed in the next few sub-sections.

Difficulty

The apparently insignificant correlation of .09 between difficulty and preference does not tell the whole story. When pamphlets were studied in series it was found that three of the four easiest were least liked, that the hardest ranked a little below average, and that every one of the median pamphlets in difficulty was the most popular in its series. The trend toward preferring median difficulty when pamphlets in their series are studied is corroborated by referring back to the two Indexes in Table XX. Four of the six most popular pamphlets rank 5, 6, 7, and 8 in difficulty.

Historical Allusions

The correlation between quantity of history and ranking of pamphlets for preference was $-.46$. A more than random tendency was exhibited for a decrease in quantity of history to accompany increasing preference.

Since the correlation between quantity of figures and quantity of history was .44, the two factors had somewhat the same ranking in pamphlets. Therefore it is possible that conclusions concerning one quality might apply to the other, or to the two elements working in conjunction. Nevertheless, there are enough differences in ranking to warrant some independent hypotheses. On the whole, those pamphlets were preferred which had less history. Excellent use of historical information sometimes tempered adverse criticisms. The historical data were presented delightfully in pamphlet P, in which the old custom of bartering was amusingly described, the growth of the use of bank money was sketched with a dramatic choice of words, and questions of interest to readers were asked which could only be answered by surveying the history of past depressions. Pamphlet P, ranking 4 in quantity of history, ranked 3.5 in preference. D, with more counted lines of history than any pamphlet except Q, was one of the two most popular among the twelve. Therefore, although the evidence favors material with little historical data, if the history

given is pertinent and well presented, this group of readers does not object to its inclusion.

Presentation of Figures

An attempt was made to isolate the factor of quantity of figures to a greater extent than was demonstrated with quantity of historical allusions. A large number⁹ of sections with the constant element of presence of figures was compared with a large number having no statistical information.

In the twelve pamphlets there were 202 sections. Of those, 85 contained figures and 117 had none. The mean average preference for the sections with figures was 2.68; the mean for those without figures was .24 less, 2.44. Since the standard deviation from the mean was only .21,¹⁰ this difference between the two means was a substantial one, indicating that the sections without figures were distinctly more popular than were those containing statistics.

The correlation of $-.59$ between preference and quantity of figures and the difference of .24 in favor of sections without figures suggest that, constant proportions of other factors being present, material is better liked which has fewer figures.

A qualification to that generalization is necessary, for the manner in which figures are presented has a great influence upon reader attitudes toward them. Sixty per cent of the pages in pamphlet D had figures in them; yet D was one of the two most popular pamphlets in the set. The other pamphlet ranking 1.5 in the Preference Index had figures in thirty per cent of its pages. Two pamphlets containing no figures ranked 5 and 8 in popularity. In the analysis of sections at the end of this chapter, one of the most popular and one of the least liked are found to deal with economic terms and figures. These do not, however, appear to be chance differences. On page 158 attention is called to a few of the differences in presentation which make one form appear uninteresting and another appear vital to the reader. More detailed studies of differences in the presentation of statistical material would be valuable.

⁹ The size of the sampling would tend to cancel other irrelevant influences.

¹⁰ The readers ranked each section on a five-point scale of interest. The theoretical average for each section might therefore range from 1.0 (superior) to 5.0 (dull). The actual averages showed a range of a little more than one position: 2.09 to 3.15. The standard deviation of this range was .21. The median was 2.62. The average preference of sections without figures was 2.44, and of sections with figures was 2.68. One-fifth of the entire range of the distribution lay between the two averages.

Presentation of Controversial Issues

Each pamphlet was classified according to that one of four methods which was used by its author to communicate his viewpoint to readers. Although numbers were assigned to each type of bias, these numbers were descriptive and could not be correlated with the preference ranks. Nevertheless, several comparisons between bias and preference may be made.

The average preference for pamphlets assigned to each of the four types is indicated in Table XXI.

TABLE XXI
Relation of Author's Method of Presenting Issues to Pamphlet
Preference of Readers

| Type of Bias | Pamphlet | Preference Rank | Mean Preference for Pamphlets in Each Type |
|------------------------|-------------|-----------------|--|
| 1. Impartial | B | 9 | 7.6 |
| | C | 3.5 | |
| | I | 6 | |
| | O | 12 | |
| | | | |
| 2. Fair partisan | D | 1.5 | 5.3 |
| | E | 11 | |
| | P | 3.5 | |
| | | | |
| 3. Salesman | H | 8 | 9.0 |
| | Q | 10 | |
| | | | |
| 4. Prejudiced partisan | F | 5 | 4.5 |
| | G | 1.5 | |
| | K | 7 | |
| | | | |

The number of pamphlets in each position is so small that the averages have no statistical significance. It is interesting, however, that the six pamphlets which presented viewpoints on both sides but expressed definite opinions of their own (types 2 and 4) were more popular than the six which either impartially dealt with all sides or did not admit the possibility of more than one side to the argument (types 1 and 3).

The way to discover the criteria used by any specific group has

been illustrated by the preceding comparison of pamphlet preference with four qualities. Several difficulties were encountered in the course of the analysis. There were too few examples of treatment of each element to reach thoroughly reliable conclusions. The number of variables was too great to permit the definite isolation of any one, except in the instance where two hundred sections with and without figures were contrasted. The interrelationships among different factors were sometimes difficult to disentangle. Within the limits of the data, however, enough has been learned to give clues to providing material for this group, clues which should be checked for corroboration at every opportunity.

On the basis of the evidence just cited, if I were selecting curriculum materials for the Civil Works Administration group, I would tentatively provide them with the following:

(a) Material that was preferably of a range of difficulty between school grades six and eight. That of moderate difficulty, without technical language, would probably be preferred by the majority of this group.

(b) Material that was not overloaded with figures. The necessary figures should be presented lucidly and cleverly.

(c) Material that had few historical references, or historical references with an evident significance.

(d) Material that presented a viewpoint vigorously, recognizing alternative viewpoints but maintaining a single one, with or without slandering opponents.

These four rules relate only to the standards analyzed here. Similar rules for the use of the other thirty-four standards in the list are necessary before the best current-problem literature could be selected for the experimental group.

STANDARDS CONTRASTED FOR TWO GROUPS DIFFERING IN EDUCATION

The four principles enumerated above would guide the selection of curriculum materials to be supplied to the whole Civil Works Administration group. By following those principles the requirements of many members would be satisfied. But the recollection of the range in preference among individuals and small groups, described in Chapter IV, would cast doubt upon the possibility of meeting the needs of every member by the selection of a single book.

There were some few pamphlets upon which most of the readers agreed; most of them liked pamphlets D, G, I, and P. One way of solving the problem of selection would be to give all of the mem-

bers the pamphlets that were liked by the majority. Another method would be to conduct an analysis of reasons for individual disagreement and an attempt to vary the selections with the tastes of different people. If the second alternative were accepted, the attack on the problem would be, first, to find the individuals that differed widely from the majority, and second, to discover why their reading preferences varied.

Six groups that might be supposed to vary from one another were studied.¹¹ There was not much difference in opinion between men and women, or between people who had studied social sciences and those who had not. A wide difference in preference was detected between eight people who had postgraduate degrees and eight who had been to college for two years or less. If any variation of reading selections were permitted among the six groups studied, those groups which differed in college education should be given two kinds of material. The problem arising then would be the establishment of different standards for selecting the two sets of material.

Contrast on Basis of Analysis of Pamphlets

The squared difference between the undergraduate and postgraduates' average ranking of pamphlets in series of three was 3.5.¹² Several factors in the background of the sub-groups have been suggested that help to account for the disagreement, factors such as differing educational and vocational experience, or differing personalities. What was there in the pamphlets which might produce such a difference in preference?

In Table XXII the four analyzed qualities of the pamphlets are placed parallel to the average preference ranks of the two sub-groups that differ in education.

An examination of the first choices of the less educated group reveals some interesting facts. In three of four instances, the best liked pamphlet has the easiest vocabulary and the lowest quantity of figures and history. The fourth instance shows pamphlet E to be the easiest in its series but to possess more history and figures than the others. Evidently the members with less education appreciate the non-technical introductions to current problems.

When the measure of difficulty determined by the readers is used, the postgraduate group ranks the most difficult pamphlet first in preference in every series. If the Difficulty Index is the instrument of

¹¹ See Chap. IV, pp. 95-102.

¹² See Table IX, pp. 100-01.

TABLE XXII

Relation between Four Qualities of Pamphlets in Series of Three and the Reading Preferences of Two Groups That Differ in Education

| Pamphlets | Preferences of Two- year College Group | Difficulty | | Quan- tity of His- tory | Quan- tity of Fig- ures | Type of Bias * | Pier- ence of Post- grad- uate Group | Pam- phlets |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|----------------|
| | | a. Diffi- culty Index | b. Reader Eval- uation | | | | | |
| Unemployment | | | | | | | | |
| B | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | B |
| C | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1.5 | C |
| D | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1.5 | D |
| Peace | | | | | | | | |
| E | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | E |
| F | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | F |
| G | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | G |
| Government | | | | | | | | |
| H | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | H |
| I | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | I |
| K | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | K |
| Money | | | | | | | | |
| O | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | O |
| P | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | P |
| Q | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | Q |

* See p. 123 for interpretation of numbers under types of bias.

1 indicates (a) most difficult, (b) most easily understood, most history, most figures, most popular

3 indicates least amount of qualities

measurement, the relation between difficulty and preference appears to be random. The postgraduate group usually likes those pamphlets with most or average amounts of history and figures best.

Another contrast between the two groups lies in their attitude toward the author's presentation of issues. Where there is a choice the postgraduates prefer pamphlets which are ranked as prejudiced or as "salesman" partisans. In no case is their last choice a prejudiced statement. The undergraduates, on the other hand, almost always prefer impartial statements, or ones in which both sides are presented by fair partisans. Two of the four pamphlets which are least liked by this group are prejudiced.

Contrast on Basis of Criticisms Made by Readers

The approach to group differences so far has been made through the use of averages and generalizations. The heart of the problem is contained in the reactions of individuals to specific materials. An example will be presented, to show how the different responses of members of the two sub-groups to the same stimulus may be used to determine the different standards that the two groups erected.

The point of widest disagreement in pamphlet preference detected anywhere in the study occurred in the rankings for preference of pamphlet H by the two sub-groups that differed in education. Most of the members of the two-year college group ranked H, "Roosevelt and the Constitution," first in preference; the average ranking of H by this group of eight was 1.38. The eight members of the post-graduate group ranked it either two or three, with an average of 2.43. This difference of 1.05¹³ between the average ranks of the two sub-groups was far higher than any other difference discovered. Why?

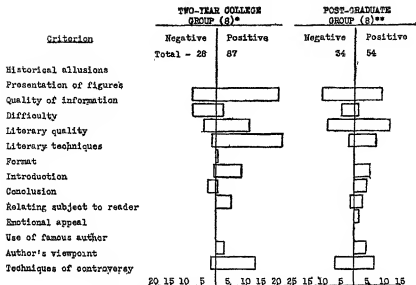
All of the criticisms made by the two sub-groups in the section reactions were classified. Frequency of mentioning the fourteen chief criteria were ranked separately and were correlated for the better and the less educated groups. Notwithstanding their difference in judgment, the two groups used the same categories of reasons with the high rank order correlation of .95. An unusual opportunity was presented to watch the conflict between the same classes of reasons, expressed positively and negatively by two opposed groups.

The frequency with which each type of reason was mentioned is shown in Graph 5. The group that liked the pamphlet made many more comments than the group that did not like it. This tendency to refuse to waste time in writing about something that does not seem worthwhile was noted once before when the so-called "careless" members of the experimental group were studied.

Most of the reasons for judging the pamphlet were stated in the five standards which ranked highest. The post-graduates made 77 per cent of all their comments and the two-year college group gave 81 per cent on the same five topics of quality of information, literary techniques, literary quality, techniques of controversy, and difficulty.

The graph shows that the greatest difference of opinion occurred concerning the quality of information presented. The less educated group mentioned the excellent quality of information in H often and made comparatively few disparaging remarks. The more educated

¹³ See Table IX, pp. 100-01.



GRAPH 5. Frequency of Classified Positive and Negative Criticisms, Showing Why Two Groups Disagreed about the Interest of Pamphlet H.

group made more negative than positive criticisms of the information. Members of the two-year college group, who were enthusiastic about H, said of its information:

Discussion is of utmost importance today. I never knew this before. Outstanding revelation. Interesting information.

Their unfavorable comments were:

Doesn't answer question in entirety. Conglomeration of names. No facts.

They either found the information valuable or wanted more of it.

The postgraduate group presented a smaller number of opinions on information, disclosing an opposite viewpoint. Two frequent adjectives were "superfluous" and "obvious." They also criticized some of the information as:

Not essential. Not very informative.

Their commendatory criticisms were:

An unusual thought. Roosevelt's stand is interesting. Gives exact information. Pertinent additional information.

Another contrast between the two groups occurred in their unfavorable comments upon difficulty. Each of them mentioned the

positive aspect of "interesting in its simplicity"; but most of the comments made by both groups on difficulty were negative. The post-graduates said.

Too big a subject to be so briefly argued. Quite elementary. Author should use man-size language. Apparently for kids.

The undergraduates criticized H thus:

Not very elucidating. Not concrete. Too much generalizing. Indefinite. Very vague concerning Constitution.

While the first group found H too easy, the second group needed more explanation and facts.

The same contrasts could be drawn between comments of the two groups which were classified under each of the criteria. The two-year college group liked H because it contained interesting and important information, because it made clear simple explanations, because it was well written, and because the author's reasoning was sound and his point of view agreeable to the readers. The post-graduate group reacted to the same pamphlet, under the same categories, by stating that information was trite and non-essential, that the literary style was juvenile and boring, that the explanations were good only as far as the too short distance that they went, and that the author's logic was ridiculous at some points.

If I were differentiating between the curriculum materials that I planned to present to different types of the Civil Works Administration members, I should take into account the apparent fact that the members with more schooling demanded more advanced treatment of topics. I would not attempt to give them a book written with a high school audience in view, whereas the less sophisticated non-graduates might enjoy such books. I should seek to gather more evidence concerning the nature of the variations among the groups at different educational levels.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF PAMPHLET ANALYSIS

It is the writer's opinion that all of the information about an investigated piece of literature, if scattered among various tabulations and interpretations, should be assembled into a condensed report. This report should present a description of the material, the results of any objective tests, and an organized analysis of opinions about the material. This type of report bears an analogy to the sociological case study, in which pertinent information is assembled in order to allow experts to judge the proper disposition of the case.

The case analysis of two pamphlets in the present study will be given in this section. One purpose of this statement is an illustration of the method of reporting upon investigated literature. A second purpose is further exploration of standards of judging reading material. In order to discover whether the methods of analysis evolved in this study would throw into relief the reasons for the popularity of one pamphlet and the unpopularity of the other, two pamphlets at opposite ends of the Preference Index were selected. As a matter of fact, while those reasons are distinct at some points, at others they overlap. The similarity of the pamphlets in some of their qualities indicates the complexity of the problem of predicting popular or unpopular material.

The Most Popular Pamphlet

The most popular pamphlet is considered to be D, even though it received the same rank of 1.5 in the Preference Index as G. It was in the preferred series on unemployment, and was a surprising favorite in view of its length and its mass of facts. The popularity of D was apparently due to the importance of the discussion to the readers, themselves unemployed, and to its dramatic presentation.

Content. Pamphlet D, "Unemployment and Its Remedies" by Harry W. Laidler.

Section

1. "The Jobless Millions." Description of typical unemployed. Figures on number of unemployed since 1920. Ill effects of unemployment.
2. "Some Types of Unemployment." Seasonal, cyclical, technological types. Caused by shifts in industry, old age. Quotations and statistics.
3. "Get the Facts." Bureau of Labor Statistics finds facts.
4. "Public Employment Exchanges." Abuses by private agencies. Plea for government to take over all employment information.
5. "Public Works." Present lack of long-range planning. Need for public works "reserve" to be tapped in hard times.
6. "Unemployment Insurance Abroad." Full analysis of British system, with tables. Briefer explanation of German, Russian, other systems.
7. "Unemployment Insurance for America." Statement of various plans proposed for America: state vs. federal, contribution by industry, voluntary systems.
8. "Other Immediate Remedies." Reduction of hours of labor, industrial stabilization, systematic tariffs, relief.
9. "The Profit System and Unemployment." Need for social planning, for socializing industry.

10. "Summary." Resumé, with numbered points, of the proposals for remedying unemployment. "A Model State Unemployment Insurance Bill."

Snap judgment preference. Fifty per cent of the experimental readers chose D to be read first of the three pamphlets dealing with unemployment; fifty-five per cent liked it best of the three after reading it. The reasons given for the snap judgment preference of D were:

| | Frequency | | Frequency |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| Good title | 6 | Clarifies problem | 2 |
| Looks comprehensive . . . | 5 | Related to current problem | 1 |
| Interesting topic | 3 | Interesting style | 1 |
| Attractive cover | 2 | Size of pamphlet | 1 |
| Related to reader interest . . | 2 | Appears impartial | 1 |
| Looks instructive | 2 | Good chapter division | 1 |

The title was next to the most popular of the twelve pamphlets. D appeared to be more comprehensive than any other.

Laboratory analysis of six qualities of pamphlet:

Techniques for relating subject to reader. The point kept foremost in D was the need for relieving suffering. The author assembled a background of factual information; but he picked out the most dramatic facts, even in discussing the technicalities of the British unemployment insurance system. Two mechanical means of catching attention were direct quotations in dialogue, reported from court hearings, and italics in the midst of factual presentations which emphasized surprising or important findings. The arguments that pointed out the weaknesses of the present individualistic system and that showed in detail how socialization might be provided would appeal to a majority of this group of readers, themselves unemployed.

Difficulty. The pamphlet ranked fifth among twelve and second among three on the Difficulty Index. It was placed just above eighth grade according to the Winnetka formula. The readers judged D to be the most difficult in its series. Their ranking of the pamphlet as harder than the formula ranking may have been due to the small type, the bad arrangement of pages, and the number of statistical data, rather than to their impression of the difficulty of the vocabulary.

Historical allusions. Although D had no allusions to history antedating the World War, it had a proportionately large

number of post-war references and was ranked eighth in quantity of history. There were ten different pages with historical data. Only three of the references furnished background for the discussion of a problem. The others were used for illustrative purposes. In the first section there were illustrations of unemployment in boom times and in the more distant past; the sixth section showed how unemployment pools in Europe operated. The background history was used to build an understanding of the American government's methods of dealing with unemployment up to 1930, of the early provisions of the English unemployment act, and of poor relief in 1930.

Presentation of figures. Although D had more pages with figures than any other pamphlet, the proportion compared to its total number of pages was only sixty per cent. D ranked fifth in this respect. Table XXIII shows the distribution of pages of figures in pamphlet D.

TABLE XXIII
Frequency of Types of Figures in Each Section of D

| Section Number | Number of Pages Containing Each of the Following Four Types of Figures | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| | Running Account | Dramatic Application | Table | Graph |
| I | 4 | — | I | — |
| 2 | 10 | 4 | — | — |
| 3 | 4 | — | — | — |
| 4 | — | — | — | — |
| 5 | 3 | — | — | — |
| 6 | 8 | — | 2 | — |
| 7 | 12 | — | I | — |
| 8 | 2 | — | — | — |
| 9 | 5 | — | — | — |
| 10 | 2 | — | — | — |
| Total | 50 | 4 | 4 | 0 |

Table XXIII showed that almost every section had a number of pages containing figures. Figures were most often incorporated in running accounts or discussions. The four instances of dramatic application occurred in the section presenting "some types of unemployment." There technological unemployment was illustrated by imagin-

ing a visit to a factory when a number of men were needed and again when few were needed, and by a comparison of the productive capacity of a man ten years ago and today. Three of the four tables had two columns that needed to be compared in only one direction; the fourth table was a more complicated full-page chart showing the financial organization of unemployment insurance systems in various countries abroad.

The most popular section in D contained five pages with figures; the least popular had no figures. When the five more popular sections were compared with the five less popular, there were 35 pages with figures in the former and 34 in the latter. The presence or absence of figures had no distinguishable effect upon section ratings.

Presentation of controversial issues. The three assistants who judged the author's method of presenting controversial issues agreed in assigning D to type of bias 2, "The facts of all sides are presented, but the author shows why he favors one position." A few readers thought that the pamphlet was unduly biased toward Socialism (it was printed by the Socialist Party); but most of the comments of readers that related to the author's way of dealing with controversial issues were favorable, considering him either impartial or a fair partisan in his presentation.

Format:

Cover of pamphlet—Blue, with black print. A cartoon of an armored figure backed by factories, crushing small scurrying men.

Size—A little smaller than average: $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$ inches. 104 pages.

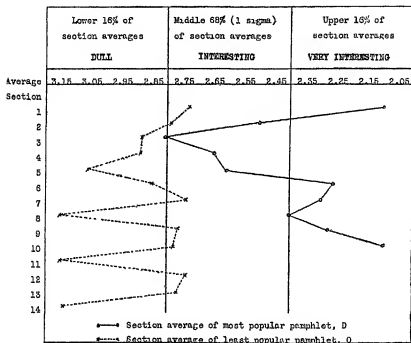
Type—Chiefly 9 point and 6 point. Much type change for quotations, causing an inartistic page. Footnotes on almost every page.

Divisions—Ten chapters, with about fifty sectional divisions. No blank half-pages between chapters.

Reader ranks of six qualities of pamphlets. The experimental readers' rankings of the six qualities were lower than might be predicted from D's popularity. It ranked best on "well written" and "good explanations." The rank on "related to personal problems" was average. It was considered to be the least attractive in appearance, the most complex in its presentation of numbers, and the hardest. The readers seemed to like the pamphlet in spite of its unattractive features.

Interest ranking. Pamphlet D ranked first in preference in the series on unemployment, and 1.5 among the twelve pamphlets. The section ratings may best be seen in Graph 6. Half of the sections fell in the upper sixteen per cent of the total distribution of ratings, and

only one dropped into the lower sixteen per cent. The introduction and the conclusion were considered not only the most interesting sections in the pamphlet, but the two best liked among over two hundred.

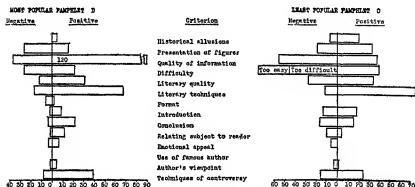


GRAPH 6. Average Rating of the Interest of Each Section in the Most and Least Popular Pamphlets

Possible explanations for the drop in popularity of section 3 are that, in the first place, it was two pages long in comparison with an average of ten pages for the others. Second, it had only three or four lines of "human interest." Third, its content did not appear to be as important to the layman as the rest of the content in the pamphlet. (See Content, p. 143.)

Classification of section reactions. Graph 7 shows visually the readers' opinions of the most and the least popular pamphlets. The most significant difference between the two columns is the drift toward favorable opinions for D and the almost even division of favorable and unfavorable opinions for O.

When the half of the graph pertaining to pamphlet D is examined more closely, two positive standards by which D was judged are prominent. There was an overwhelming approval of the selection and quality of information; and the literary techniques, both dramatic and expository, were praised. More negative criticisms were leveled at the information than at any other standard. The graph depicting section reactions to D will have more meaning if typical criticisms of readers, drawn from some of the most frequent favorable and unfavorable comments, are cited.



GRAPH 7. Frequency of Classified Positive and Negative Criticisms of the Most and Least Popular Pamphlets. (Based on information in Appendix III C)

The most frequent favorable criticisms of sections, classified under the following standards, were:

Content: *Information* (including timeliness, selection, and quality)

Extremely useful information. New facts and figures. Explanation of interesting and helpful remedies. Very interesting review of plans. Problems thoroughly discussed. Fact and color well intermixed. Well stocked with worth-while information.

Form: *Literary techniques* (including expository and dramatic)

Rich with varied and interesting quotations, illustrations, and documents. Exceptionally good comparison. Several interesting examples of unemployment. Scientific analysis. Clear explanation of existing conditions.

Presenting controversial issues: *Techniques of controversy* (including argument, criticism, influence on reader)

All alternative possibilities well covered. Comprehensive and constructive criticism. Splendid suggestions. I, too, favor unemployment insurance. Interesting because point of view differs from my own. Citizen should know this to vote intelligently.

The most frequent unfavorable criticisms of sections, classified under the following standards, were:

Content: *Information* (see above)

Information old and inadequate. Incomplete information. Too many quotations. Gross misstatements. Some of the information is debatable.

Form: *Difficulty* (including concepts, abstractness, condensation)

Incomprehensible and muddled facts. Too long. The author states too little in too many words. Too much generalization and not enough concrete information at this point. Too many details presented.

Content: *Presentation of figures* (including tables, graphs, figures)

Too statistical. Tendency to be dry; too factual. Don't care for technical information containing facts and figures. First chart not clear, and rest of section too factual. Figures are confusing.

General criticisms. More revealing than any of the piecemeal analyses are the general criticisms which the readers made of the pamphlets. Often those readers who were not successful in giving full section reactions were voluble in their final remarks. A typical opinion will be given, and then the salient features of the positive and negative comments will be extracted.

A typical opinion of pamphlet D

I think that the author has presented the material in a logical and inclusive manner. He achieved what he desired to do, namely, made clear the meaning of unemployment, showed what has been and is being done to cope with the problem in other countries, and gave an intelligent treatment of possible American solutions. His material is authentic and represents an extended knowledge of the subject. As is so often not true, he presents the material in an interesting manner. I gained much that was helpful in my thinking from reading the pamphlet.

Content

Fine mixture of fact and trimming, well documented. Full account of facts, though effort is required to read so many details. Material is authoritative and represents an extended knowledge of subject.

Though interesting, subject matter is too detailed and complex. Too extensive quotations. Article tiresome only in spots that deal with statistics.

Form

Very colorful use of dramatic quotations. Pamphlet made interesting by picture of actual conditions. Rich in thought, well organized. Simple but forceful terms used. Excellent in analysis; gets to the root of the matter and threshes it out in smooth, understandable, and readable style.

If study were more detailed, would be more interesting. Picture painted has statistical coldness; more vital picturizations of what figures imply should be given. Material presented logically, but not simply.

Author's display of viewpoint

Case presented in as unbiased and impartial a viewpoint as possible. Sponsored by a political organization, it frankly announces its bias, however, facts are presented fairly, with no attempt to coerce the reader into the author's beliefs.

In spots seems written in a socialistic ballyhoo fashion.

The commendation of pamphlet D was by no means unanimous. It achieved its first rank position by pleasing many readers, rather than by making strong followers of some and enemies of others. It was well liked because the author wrote clearly and well, knowing how to set up a human bond between himself and his readers on every page. He gave them information that they wanted upon a topic that was interesting. Since he did not make an emotional appeal himself, he aroused few emotions in readers.

The pamphlet had several weaknesses, which detracted from its interest for the majority of readers. Its type and page arrangement were poor. The large number of data produced a lack of interest in the less ambitious readers. It should be said in defense of the pamphlet on the latter point that it was written to serve as a source book rather than to interest the casual reader. That it succeeded in creating interest among so many readers is noteworthy.

The Least Popular Pamphlet

Although O was the least popular pamphlet with the experimental readers, it had many good qualities. No pamphlet was included in this study which was not worthy of serious attention. This pamphlet was given a favorable mention in Herring's "Twelve Inch Bookshelf." [1, p. 8] It found staunch supporters among the readers in the experimental group. On the other hand, the lack of interest in the subject felt by these readers was serious; the author had not considered this handicap sufficiently to surmount it for the experimental group.

Content. Pamphlet O, "Inflation: What Is the Gold Standard?" by Gordon Hayes.

Section

1. "Introduction." Money is one of the most important institutions. Its history is old; its system is changing.
2. "The Gold Standard." Definition is elaborated with facts.
3. "Bank Deposits as Money." The comparatively large amount of money in the banks is shown by a graph. A table shows growth in loans to banks over a period of seventeen years.

4. "Gold Reserves." The government holds most of the gold. When people lost confidence and withdrew money, the President issued an edict forbidding withdrawal.
5. "Bimetallism." Double standard money has had a varied career in the United States since 1792.
6. "Why We Use Gold and Silver." Metal is superior to other less standardized forms of wealth.
7. "Gold Today." The value of gold is a carry-over from earlier times. It is largely a reserve now.
8. "The Merit of the Gold Standard." The gold standard restricts the amount of money in circulation. It stabilizes foreign exchange.
9. "Fiat Money." Definitions. Examples of its use in England, America, and other countries are given.
10. "Inflation." Definition. Inflation occurred in America at the time of the Great War.
11. "Deflation." Definition. Deflation occurred in America after 1929. Was tragic.
12. "Why Prices Fell." There was a decline in buying power and in loans. This resulted in hoarding.
13. "The Rise in Prices from March to September, 1933." A price rise was caused by increased confidence in business and a hope of inflation.
14. "The Difficulty of this Subject." This discussion has indicated the intricacies of money. A citizen should be skeptical of any proposals.

Snap judgment preference. Pamphlet O was selected by twenty-one per cent of the readers, who thought that it looked the most interesting in its series; sixteen per cent rated it first after reading the series. The reasons given for the snap judgment preference of O were:

| | Frequency | | Frequency |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Interesting topic | 4 | Attractive cover . . . | 1 |
| Author a Ph.D. . . . | 2 | Simple | 1 |
| Looks informational . . . | 2 | Promising table of con- | |
| Interested in topic . . . | 1 | tent | 1 |

Laboratory analysis of six qualities of pamphlet:

Techniques for relating subject to reader. The author made an educational approach to the subject, in a concise and matter-of-fact tone. Simple language with illustrative facts were used to touch the readers' interest. The author showed the strength and weakness of every argument. His attitude was calm and scholarly, never fiery.

Difficulty. O was easy; it ranked ninth among twelve pamphlets and third in its series according to the Winnetka formula. Its

grade placement was 6.7. When the readers judged its difficulty, they ranked O second in its series of three. Since the difficulty of the second pamphlet as determined by the formula was 6.8, an accurate discrimination between the difficulty of the two could not be expected.

Historical allusions. The comparatively large number of historical allusions in O was indicated by its ranking third in quantity of history. The allusions were concentrated in three sections and in a fourth paragraph. One section illustrated the use of fiat money during Civil War times; the other examples all occurred after 1914. Section 4 gave the effect of the depression on banks. Section 5 sketched the history of bimetallism. Sections 9 and 10 included history as illustrations, first of fiat money, and second of inflation in America.

Presentation of figures. O ranked first in quantity of figures: all but two of its pages had some sort of quantitative data. There were two graphs, one table, one example of dramatic application (illustrating the creation of a money market by borrowing from the bank), and sixteen cases of figures incorporated in the context.

Presentation of controversial issues. The three assistants who judged types of bias all thought that O was impartial in the presentation of viewpoints. The fundamental facts were stated objectively; the points upon which different authorities take issue were not mentioned.

Format:

Cover of pamphlet—White, with black print. Centered cut showing a man in possession of tools of science and power looking over a tall city.

Size— $4\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ inches. 19 pages of context, with bibliography and questions in addition.

Type—12 point. Sections headed by heavier, larger type.

Divisions—Fourteen sections, a little over a page each in length.

Reader ranks of six qualities of pamphlet. The readers' ratings of pamphlet O corresponded with the pamphlet's lack of popularity. There were three third ranks: "well written," "good explanations," and "related to personal problems." O was ranked first in its explanation of figures, second on appearance, and second on ease of understanding.

Interest ranking. O was ranked twelfth in interest in the whole set, and third in comparison with the other two pamphlets on unstable money. There is no questioning the fact that the readers considered it dull if Graph 6, page 147, is examined. There half of the sections were shown to be among the dull sixteen per cent; the other

half were not far removed from the division line. The two sections that had an average of 3.15 were the least popular sections among all of the pamphlets.

In searching for reasons for the difference in interest of the sections, it was found that the five more popular sections had only eight pages of figures, as against twelve pages in the less popular. Half of the history was in sections on one side of the "dull" line, half on the other. Section 11, where the first appearance of a "human interest" phrase was noted under content above, had the lowest average of all. (See analysis of section, page 143.) Section 12 was the most interesting in the pamphlet, with its account of "why prices fell." Section 13 was almost as well liked; it described the reason for a subsequent rise in prices. The interest in sections 12 and 13 may be explained by the relatively new ideas presented there.

Classification of section reactions. Graph 7, which appears on page 148, shows that the experimental readers made a few more favorable than unfavorable section comments upon pamphlet O. The section criticisms of pamphlet O were better distributed among all of the standards than were those for D. Only three criticisms were conspicuously frequent: the commendation of good explanations and examples under literary techniques, and the unfavorable criticisms of difficulty and of the quality of information. Two standards drew no comments: emotional appeal and the use of the author's name. (The latter was mentioned twice under snap judgments, in referring to the author's Ph.D.) The four most often mentioned standards will be given, two of which had many comments of both a favorable and unfavorable nature.

The most frequent favorable criticisms of sections, classified under the following standards, were:

Form: *Literary techniques* (including dramatic and expository)

Good illustrations. Interesting description. Short but clear explanation. Striking fact mentioned.

Form: *Difficulty* (including terms, concepts, concreteness, and condensation)

All technical terms omitted, but equivalent meanings clear. Technical subject broken up and made readable. Keeps one interested by simplicity of style. Clearly understandable.

Content: *Information* (including timeliness, selection and quality)

Interesting because of the present talk about inflation. The information given here helps me to understand what the government is faced with. Shows the operation of the system of money clearly. Author does well to point out lack of knowledge within the field of monetary systems.

The most frequent unfavorable criticisms of sections, classified under the following standards, were:

Form: *Difficulty* (see above)

Not enough definition of terms; not clear. Uninteresting explanation of a term. Author is writing down; too elementary. Much too involved. Getting out of my depths again. Writer should have been constantly aware of the fact he is dealing with a technical subject about which the reader knows nothing.

Form: *Literary quality* (including grammar, simplicity, vitality, organization, adult approach)

Seems to be having all he can do to watch his step grammatically. Could use more simple, less involved sentences. Getting nowhere. Author not coherent. Development is slow. Points not made forcefully. Interesting topic, but author talks like a Sunday-school teacher. Must be written for a high school pupil.

Content: *Information* (see above)

Too many necessary background details omitted. Not enough information. No doubt very learned, but as far as I am concerned, not very informative. States only well-known, elementary facts. Emphasizes the very obvious. Old problem of bimetalism retold.

General criticisms. The general criticisms contained many conflicting opinions, as may be seen in the excerpts below.

A typical opinion of pamphlet O

In the author's effort at extreme objectivity, he tends to sacrifice style to method of approach. This pamphlet is written in too general a style. At times it simply "slurs over" important issues. However, it is clearly written, readable, and easily understood.

Introduction

Too long in getting started. Too abrupt; author does nothing to stimulate the reader's interest.

Content

Technical subject treated in simple manner. Contains major facts in regard to money. Historical development of money especially interesting. Diagram helps to illustrate story of inflation.

It is brief and does not give facts that are essential for understanding. Gives the reader a half-cocked view of a difficult subject. Not enough explanation of charts and tables. Use of large figures without any significance.

Form

Presented clearly and concisely. Vital facts vigorously presented. Author writes in a smooth, simple style.

Lacks fire to make it appealing. Author reads like a thinking machine rather than a living person. Dry, heavy, and academic.

Conclusion

A sense of bewilderment is created by reference to intricacy of subject. No definite conclusions are reached.

It is true of pamphlet O, as it was of pamphlet D, that there was no unanimous agreement on it. More than half of the comments about O were favorable; but there were more unfavorable criticisms about O than about any other pamphlet.

The chief faults of O were that it had no dramatic touches, that it was not related to the interest of the experimental readers, and that it was not in touch with their requirements for a discussion of inflation. Almost half of the negative criticisms of difficulty said that it was too easy, with too elementary a selection of information. The other half said that it was too hard, with too great a condensation and a lack of adequate information.

Some readers found its information valuable, with its comprehensive, definitive survey of a field. The statistical information was well presented. The explanations were clear and were simply stated.

ANALYSIS OF MOST AND LEAST POPULAR SECTIONS

In conclusion, let us examine one further set of data in order to intensify the contrast between the material that was popular and the material that was unpopular in the opinion of Civil Works Administration readers. Two sections from pamphlets D and O, sections that happen to be similar in a few respects and widely different in others, will be given the reader to see the material that the experimental group criticized.

The most popular and the least popular sections among all the twelve pamphlets will be quoted. They were selected after examining all of the interest ratings. The method of rating each section on a five-point scale and of obtaining an interest average for every section was described previously. The two most popular sections among the entire two hundred had an average of 2.09. They were both in pamphlet D; one was the introduction. The average of the two least popular sections was 3.15. Both were in O; one was section 11. Those two will be presented.

The well-liked section from D tried to awaken a consciousness of the meaning of unemployment, while the disliked section from O showed the effect of deflation upon the nation. Both authors wished

to arouse in the readers an impression of uneasiness concerning the condition of the country; but one did it by means of incidents and dramatized figures and the other by statistics. The author of O was cramped for space, having less than a page to discuss his topic, while the author of D wrote more than five pages.

The first section must be condensed greatly, chiefly by omitting stories and a table. The second section will be repeated in complete form.

The Most Popular of Two Hundred Sections, from Pamphlet D

Section 1. The Jobless Millions (condensed)

I am writing this pamphlet during the second year of the industrial depression. For the last two winters millions of men and women have been walking from factory to factory, from shop to shop, from office to office, pleading for the privilege to work but denied that privilege. "A thousand men are sleeping nightly on the lower level of Michigan Avenue," reads one of the numerous reports from Chicago. "The lack of employment has knocked the bottom out of things . . . family morale has been destroyed . . . families that used to get along simply disintegrate and take to drinking and begging," writes Helen Hall.

Stories such as these are multiplied by the thousands. Just how long the line of unemployed is it is impossible to state with any degree of accuracy. *The census taken late in January, 1931, led to an estimate of 6,050,000 out of a job, able to work and looking for it. This number, however, failed to include those on part time, a group which probably amounts to another six or seven millions.* In the best years, when plants were working to capacity, there was a margin of unemployment amounting to more than a million men. (Table was given showing average minimums for unemployment from 1920 to 1927). And these figures, the National Bureau of Economic Research insists, were rock-bottom *minimum figures.*

The greatest tragedy of unemployment is its psychological effect upon the worker. A vice-president of a public utility was discharged as the result of a merger. He was compelled to go to a sanitarium to recover from a subsequent nervous breakdown. Constant irregularity of employment is bound to leave its mark on the worker. Humiliation, want and hunger frequently leave their indelible effect on mothers and children.

The author of this section possessed a rhythmic style, in which the repetition of patterns and ideas led the reader forward easily. He gave several illustrations, then proceeded to an italicized generalization. When he presented figures he said in effect after each repetition, "Go back to look at them, for they are important." He skillfully introduced an admirable figure of industry—a vice-president—as the dramatic link in an argument, and ended the section with

a plea for mothers and children. No reader could follow through illustrations to generalizations, back to concrete examples and then to inevitable outcomes, without being aware of the intensity of the unemployment problem.

The writer of the section on deflation in pamphlet O had a different purpose from the Socialist author of D. He was preparing an educational explanation of inflation, of the sort that an audience of high school students might study. The experimental readers would not accept his purpose, but wished to be shown the underlying significance of inflation and to learn how it might affect them. The least popular section follows.

The Least Popular of Two Hundred Sections, from Pamphlet O

Section 11. Deflation (in toto)

The word deflation also has many different meanings, but the general meaning is that prices are falling sharply. We were in such a period from the summer of 1929 to March, 1933. During that time, the wholesale price level fell from 150 on the basis of 100 for 1913 to 80 in the week ending March 4, 1933.

It is difficult to exaggerate the tragic consequences of such a marked decline in prices in less than four years. The income of the farmers of the nation was cut in half as a result of this decline in prices, falling from eleven billion dollars in 1929 to about five billion dollars in 1932. Producers of raw materials, other than agricultural products, found their profit margins wiped out and curtailed production. Manufacturers were faced with declining markets. Total industrial production fell from an index of 125 in the summer of 1929 to less than 60 in the summer of 1932, a decline of more than 50 per cent. It became more and more difficult to pay debts—bankruptcies increased, mortgages were foreclosed, and the number of unemployed rose to a staggering proportion of the total working population. No one knows how many persons were unemployed in the spring of 1933. Estimates run as high as 15,000,000 and 17,000,000 which is approximately a third of the working population of 50,000,000. [5, pp. 17 f.]

The author has no particular literary style; his short sentences neither flow together nor build to a climax. Only two phrases in the section indicate any attitude toward the data, "tragic consequences" and "staggering proportions." In most of the other sentences the bare facts must arouse their own images in readers' minds. He expects figures standing alone to convey a vivid meaning to laymen. For instance, the phrase at the end of the first paragraph, "the wholesale price level fell from 150 . . . to 80 . . ." would paint a picture of panic to one who understood the technical verbal

process of economics; but to one not accustomed to seeing any significance in figures the phrase would be meaningless.

Given the same assignment faced by the author of O, the author of the preceding section from D might have defined the term "deflation" by individualizing a few of the facts, letting separate stories build into one or two well-selected generalizations. He would have told the reader the meaning of large figures in terms that were part of the reader's experience.

SUMMARY

The experimental reading materials were analyzed for two different reasons. The particular problem of this study was furthered in that the information needed to complete an analysis of some of the standards was secured. In addition, some of the ways to study books and to synthesize the findings were demonstrated.

The process of building standards described in this chapter started with the laboratory analysis of several qualities of the experimental pamphlets. For instance, the quality of difficulty was studied by applying a formula to see what proportion of it existed in each pamphlet. Next, the ratings by readers of the same qualities were analyzed. As many of their ratings as possible were used: their rating of pamphlets for difficulty was compared with the formula ranking and found to differ from the formula on half of the pamphlets. This type of analysis presented a graphic picture of some of the qualities in the pamphlets.

The next problem was to discover what the readers thought of those qualities. This was solved by comparing the qualities of the pamphlets with the preferences of readers for them. Using difficulty as the example again, the Difficulty Index was placed parallel to the Pamphlet Preference Index to see what level of difficulty was best liked. The comparison showed that ordinarily the preferred pamphlets were those that were average in difficulty. This generalization described the standard of difficulty that was applied to the pamphlets by the readers. Similar generalizations were obtained for the standards of presentation of figures, historical allusions, techniques of controversy, and appearance.

After the standards that were applied by the whole group were determined by examining the average of group preferences, a refinement was made. The differing requirements of sub-groups were investigated. Two groups whose formal educational experience differed by at least three years were found to select the most interest-

ing pamphlets on quite different bases. The group with fewer years of schooling liked pamphlets that had few figures, little history, and a simple style, while the group with more years of schooling required pamphlets that were more advanced in each of those qualities.

The last step in the procedure of studying standards is to assemble all of the available information about each, including the criticisms offered by readers. Chapter VI is devoted to this task. When the present chapter had carried the analysis of standards as far as it could, it resumed the task of studying the experimental materials in order to provide a pattern for synthesizing and evaluating the information collected about them.

The most and the least popular pamphlets were presented as "case studies" of the experimental literature. Enough information was assembled about each to show its composition, to indicate reasons for its popularity or lack of it, and to evaluate its qualities. Finally, the most interesting section and the least interesting were contrasted in order to diagnose the strength of one and to suggest remedies for the weakness of the other.

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CHAPTER VI

STANDARDS FOR SELECTING READING MATERIAL

THE value of knowing the standards by which readers judge books, and the ways of discovering and defining some of those standards have been presented from various angles in the first five chapters of this book. In Chapter II it was shown that, if reading is to have the place that its importance warrants in adult education, books which hold the interest and answer the questions of readers must be supplied. An intelligently directed effort must be made to find books that are adapted to specific groups. In Chapter III three necessary steps in the selection of reading material were indicated: discovering aspects of literature that make it popular or unpopular, analyzing selected material in the light of these aspects, and studying the requirements of specific types of readers concerning these aspects of the material. In the author's opinion, the threefold process not only will lead immediately to selection of good study material, but ultimately may simplify the selection of all study materials by providing serviceable rules to this end. These steps were illustrated by the example of one group and one set of pamphlets in Chapters IV and V.

In order to complete the presentation of standards of book selection, the information collected while performing the above three steps will be organized in terms of the standards which it explained. In addition to utilizing information from the present study all of the available research upon the various standards will be introduced. The knowledge obtained from those sources will be presented under each of the thirty-eight criteria that readers used in evaluating controversial public problems.

STUDIES OF ADULT READING INTERESTS

Most exploratory studies of adult reading interests have stopped at the point where this study begins. They are concerned with a preliminary problem: determining the subjects that adults enjoy reading about. Their findings are a necessary introduction to the present problem, namely, discovering how adults evaluate the subjects that they

read. Those preliminary studies show how to delimit the field of selecting a subject which a specific group will study. Some of the best known of them will be mentioned briefly.

One type of study is concerned with the amount and the quality of reading which adults do. The type may be illustrated with analyses performed by Rasche, Monroe, and Witty. Rasche investigated the kind of material that was most frequently read by a special group; Monroe and Witty were interested especially in the variations between reading habits of different groups.

Rasche [8]* studied the reading habits of seven thousand vocational school pupils between fourteen and eighteen years of age. In the field of magazine reading, the men most frequently read magazines dealing with fiction, general topics, and science. The highest per cent of women read fiction, home, and general magazines. Students who had been enrolled in the school six months read less fiction and more general magazines than did those who had just entered the school. In newspapers, more than seventy per cent of the men read city news, comics, sports, and world news. Seventy per cent of the women read only the comics and stories.

Monroe [7] interviewed two hundred seventy residents of Chicago. On an average, they spent ninety minutes each day in reading. The amount and type of reading varied with the occupation of the reader.

Witty [12] asked mothers of preschool children about their reading. When he classified the results in terms of years of formal education, he found that there was little difference between the amount and kind of reading that mothers at various educational levels did, with one exception. Mothers in the least educated group read less than those in the better educated groups and spent their reading time upon a different type of literature. But college graduates read the same type of material as high school graduates.

When Witty correlated reading habits with the family income, he found a positive correlation between increasing income and increasing time spent in reading. The mothers in homes with an income between \$3000 and \$7500 read significantly more than groups with lower or higher incomes.

A second type of study deals with the general or specific subjects that are interesting to selected groups. Examples of this type are the studies made by Roberts and Davis, and by Waples and Tyler.

* Throughout this chapter numbers in brackets refer to bibliographical references to Chapter VI, as given on pp. 199-202.

Roberts and Davis [9] gave a questionnaire to two hundred fifty teachers, in which the teachers were asked to recall the books they had read during the previous year. The investigators grouped the various returns under the heads of professional, literature, current publications, and biography. The authors analyzed fluctuations in mention of topics in relation to teaching experience, subjects taught, age, living conditions, academic training, hours spent reading weekly, and presence or absence of a professional library.

The best example of the detailed examination of reading interests is Waples and Tyler's study of "What People Want to Read About" [11]. They asked ten different types of groups to check those topics which they would like to read about from a carefully prepared list of 117 topics picked from recent magazine articles. The expressed interests of all these groups were tabulated from many angles, and showed that the most important factors influencing choice of topics were, in order, sex, schooling, occupation, age, environment, and time spent per week in reading. All of the sampled groups were interested in the topics of international attitudes and problems and personal hygiene. There was no topic that was unpopular with every group.

The third type of study of reading interests is concerned with a somewhat different phase of the analysis of reading interests. After discovering what subjects people are interested in reading about, the next problem is to find why they are interested in those particular subjects. Several different approaches to a solution of this problem are exemplified in the studies by Montgomery, Hart and Holbrook.

Montgomery [6] attempted to find underlying psychological motives for reading. His method was to ask about six hundred people why they did recreational reading. They said to satisfy curiosity, to relax, to get emotional satisfaction, to secure culture, to gain vicarious experience, to encounter vivid description, to get background, and to idle away time.

Studies have also attempted to discover the reasons why certain writing is successful. For example, in an unpublished master's thesis, Hart [4] selected ten novels which had been the most popular over a decade. Book reviewers' opinions of them were studied. They were then carefully analyzed for action, characterization, structure, treatment of form, and style. Conclusions about some factors which were related to the novels' popularity were drawn from these "case studies."

A delightful study of the reading qualities demanded by woods-

men was made by Holbrook [5], who has "logged all over the country" and knew his group. The study was a report of experience rather than of research. Holbrook named the magazines that loggers read in order of preference, gave case studies, if so technical a term could be applied to his narratives, and left no doubt about the kind of fiction to supply this kind of reader. He said, "Most loggers like their literary meat red. They want a story with black curly hair on its chest." Again, "They strongly favor the gallon hat, two-gun cowboy school of books."

The studies which have been cited are typical of the best analyses of (a) the amount and quality of reading that specific groups do, (b) the subjects in which readers are interested, and (c) the general qualities that readers like to find in their books. The logical next step is an examination of experiments upon the special qualities to be found in books. The experiments that have been performed by other investigators, where such experiments have been located, will be summarized under the treatment of each quality in the following pages. Research studies have been made of seven of the thirty-eight standards in the Combined List of Criteria. These experiments are described under the following criteria. A 2, *presentation of figures*.¹ B 1, *difficulty*; B 3 a, *dramatic techniques*; B 4 a, *type*; B 4 c, *illustrations*; B 4 f, *title*, and B 4 g, *make-up of book*.

The fact that comparatively few standards have been subjected to experimentation indicates a lack of research upon fundamental problems of selecting literature to interest and educate adults. If there are studies of standards which the writer has not indicated in succeeding pages, they are too obscure to be of much influence upon further research, for all of the ordinary and some extraordinary sources were searched for contributory studies.² This study has suggested problems that might be investigated under several of the standards.³

The standards discussed in the following pages are in many stages of formulation. Some of them are little more than bare topical headings with a few reader criticisms to amplify and define them. Others have been studied sufficiently to be more clearly delineated and to have some guides to their use erected. All of them need to be worked out much more fully for differing groups and for varied types of reading materials.

¹ The identification preceding this and the following criteria refers to the position in the classification outline.

² The investigation of sources was not carried on systematically after June, 1934.

³ See Chap. III, pp. 64-67.

DESCRIPTION OF STANDARDS

Explanation of Headings Used in Describing Standards

A uniform method of describing each standard for selecting reading material has been adopted. The importance quarter and the positive-negative ratio will be stated for each standard. Then the experimental evidence will be assembled, first from other studies and next from this investigation. Opinions of writers upon the importance of the standard will be cited and interesting comments that the experimental readers made in regard to it will be stated. Finally, the divisions into which the criticisms of pamphlets were classified will be given.

In many instances information was not obtained for some of the headings described below. Under such circumstances the heading will be omitted without comment. Each standard is introduced by a paragraph that gives its chief characteristics, either in terms of the kinds of criticism that are classified under it or in terms of significant facts about it.

Importance quarter. The importance quarter was described fully in Chapter IV, page 83. The reader will recall that the thirty-eight standards were ranked in order from most often to least often mentioned. The best indication of a standard's proper position was thought to be, not the specific rank, but the quarter of the distribution in which the rank fell. If a standard is in the first quarter, then it is one of the nine that were most often mentioned. Frequency of mention and importance are here considered to be synonymous; therefore a standard in the first quarter is among the first nine in importance, and a standard in the fourth quarter is among the lowest nine in importance.

Positive-negative ratio. There is no way of telling from an examination of the favorable and unfavorable reactions listed under a standard whether or not most of the reactions are favorable. For example, under A 1, page 166, did the classified criticisms usually suggest that historical references were interesting and important, or were they perhaps more frequently considered dull and too abundant? The method of discovery is to consult the positive-negative ratio. The ratio is based upon the section reactions and indicates the proportion of them that were favorable and the proportion that were unfavorable. Returning to historical allusions, the positive-negative ratio is 83+ : 17-. This ratio means that eighty-three per cent of the criticisms were listed as interesting, important, or easy, and that

seventeen per cent were regarded as dull, too lengthy, or wrongly interpreted.

Evidence from other experiments. Any experimental studies which bear upon each standard will be introduced under the appropriate headings. In some areas where many investigations have been made, only a few typical ones will be cited.

Evidence from this study. Any data that may have been contributed by this study will be reported. Generally the data will be assembled from discussions in Chapters IV and V and from the Appendix, but occasionally data will be presented for the first time.

The evidence from this study must always be interpreted in the light of the facts about the experimental group.⁴ Thus, a full report incorporated in historical allusions would read: Forty-five people with a college education, who had been unemployed for some time but who were largely trained for professional jobs, two-thirds of whom were men, two-thirds of whom were under twenty-seven, seven-eighths of whom were unmarried, one-half of whom attended no church, and four-fifths of whom were interested in reading about most of the subjects treated in the experimental pamphlets, tended to dislike historical allusions. The information about the group will not be repeated in the citations of evidence from this experiment, but should be recalled every time that the group's preferences are mentioned. Since previous experience is a primary determinant of preferences, the experimental group's background is important. Groups with other backgrounds will have other preferences both in subject matter and in standards.

Expert opinions. Writers, adult educators, publishers and librarians all have opinions about the standards that operate when readers select books. Some of their opinions were collected in this study and are classified here under the appropriate standards. The sources are identified in Appendix I A, where the expert opinion list is given in full. The number in the footnote following each opinion refers to the position in the outline in Appendix I A.

Interesting reader comments. Pertinent criticisms by readers, selected from either general or section reactions, will be presented whenever they aid in clarifying the definition of the standard.

Classification of reader criticisms. The readers gave almost forty-five hundred criticisms of the experimental pamphlets, which were organized under thirty-eight different divisions of standards. Many decisions were made concerning the assignment of criticisms to the

⁴ The facts are presented in Chap. IV, pp. 84-87.

various categories. Gradually a definitive outline was prepared to show all of the shades of expression that could be included under each standard. All of the criticisms given by the experimental readers can be classified under one or another of the categories listed in the "classification" beneath the standards. The classification is stated in this text for two purposes: first, to define the standards more precisely, and second, to aid others who wish to use the same standards in their classification of a large number of readers' criticisms.

Favorable criticisms are given in a column on the left of the page, and unfavorable criticisms are given on the right. Different shades of the meaning of the standard are assigned to different lines. All of the standards described here are listed in Chapter IV, Table V; the letter and number to the left of each standard refer to the classification of the standard in that outline. In addition, the outline of the four major divisions of the list will be given at the beginning of each division to aid orientation to the position of the standards.

Standards for Selecting Reading Material

A. CONTENT

Under content are classified all of the readers' criticisms that are primarily concerned with subject matter. Since we are dealing with qualities of content rather than with the context itself, we ask, not what subject matter should be presented to a given group but what the qualifications should be of any subject matter that is presented.

A. Content

1. Historical allusions
2. Presentation of figures
3. Treatment of subject matter
 - a. Timeliness
 - b. Selection of information
 - c. Quality of information

A I. HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS

Although the experimental readers made comparatively few criticisms of history, as the importance quarter showed, the history that was present in the pamphlets apparently was a deterrent to their preference for pamphlets.

Every one of the readers' criticisms that includes history in its wording or that obviously refers to a passage containing abundant historical allusions should be classified under historical allusions.

Importance quarter: 4 (least important)

Positive-negative ratio: 83+ : 17--

(No evidence from other experiments)

Evidence from this study:

In performing the pamphlet analysis of the number of historical allusions, history was defined as dating from the beginning of the present presidential term (1932).⁵ There was a definite though unreliable tendency for the experimental readers to prefer those pamphlets which contain fewer lines of history. The rank order correlation between preference and number of historical allusions was $-.46$.⁶ Two of the pamphlets with most history employed the allusions in an interesting manner and were among the most popular pamphlets. Historical data may not be a handicap when they are interestingly presented in pleasing content.⁷

There was practically no relationship between difficulty and quantity of history. Rho in that case was $.03$. Quantity of history and quantity of figures tended to increase together, as shown by a correlation of $.44$.⁶

(No expert opinions)

(No interesting reader comments)

Classification of reader criticisms under HISTORICAL ALLUSIONS:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) Interesting treatment | (1) Dull |
| (2) Important | (2) Too much given |
| (3) Easy | (3) Wrongly interpreted |

A 2. PRESENTATION OF FIGURES

The presence of figures in exposition is known to have a definite effect upon readers' attitudes toward the material. Although students often demanded figures in answer to questions, they always wanted the figures presented with clarity and with an indication of their significance.

All reader criticisms concerning figures and those few about facts that refer definitely to quantitative data are included under the presentation of figures. Remarks about facts in a broader sense are classified under exposition (B 3 b).

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 54+ : 46—

⁵ See Chap. V, p. 119.

⁶ See Chap. V, Table XX.

⁷ See Chap. V, p. 134.

Evidence from other experiments:

Magill [21] performed the valuable service of tabulating the frequency of occurrence of various graphic forms in current reading matter of the "non-specialist" type. He sampled general magazines, newspapers, and automotive instruction sheets until he had what he believed was a representative sampling. The rankings for the frequency of the five major groups of graphs was (approximately).

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Maps—10 | Architectural drawings—.6 |
| Mechanical drawings—2 | Electric circuit diagrams—.05 |
| Graphs—1 | |

Washburne [23] tried out different forms of the same material on over two hundred children and, in light of his findings, derived a list of rules for presenting figures. Typical rules are:

When in doubt about the difficulty of data, never use a paragraph or a pictograph.

For complex comparisons with time constant, use a bar graph.

For extremely simple comparisons, use a pictograph.

For specific amounts, use round numbers (500, not 532 or five hundred).

A controversy was started in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* by W. C. Eells [20] over the merits of circles rather than bars to show proportions in graphs. In spite of general opinion to the contrary, he found students to be more accurate, faster, and more interested when reading and interpreting circles than when reading bar graphs. His findings were substantiated by Croxton and Strykker [19], with larger groups of judges and more carefully paired diagrams. In both cases, however, the diagrams were unlabeled and were presented separately. This fact was pointed out by R. von Huhn [22], who questioned the validity of the findings.

Evidence from this study:

The rank order correlation between preference for pamphlets and number of pages with figures was $-.59$.⁸ There were several instances in which rank order of figures and of preference were widely different. Both pamphlets D and O were high in quantity of numbers, but one was most popular and the other was least.

Comparison of all pamphlet sections containing figures with those having no figures revealed an important difference between preference averages in favor of sections without numerical data.⁹

⁸ See Chap. V, Table XX.

⁹ See Chap. V, p. 135.

Comparison of the most popular section in all of the pamphlets with the least popular section showed that, if figures were made interesting by pointing out their significance or by dramatizing them, they were more successful than if the reader had to interpret them himself.¹⁰

Expert opinions:

People want facts rather than theories when they are looking for help with problems.¹¹ Avoid overweighting written material with complicated graphs and details.¹² Statistics should be supplemented with simple diagrams.¹²

Interesting reader comments:

Charts and figures do more explaining than the reading matter does. Large figures which have no significance for the reader are used. Reader interest is killed by use of graphs and charts so near the beginning.

Classification of reader criticisms under PRESENTATION OF FIGURES:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| (1) Easy | (1) Too technical; heavy |
| (2) Full explanation; complete | (2) Too much tabulation; not enough explanation |
| (3) Interesting; good | (3) Boring |

A 3. TREATMENT OF SUBJECT MATTER

Treatment of subject matter refers to all reader criticisms of the general content of the material under the following three sub-headings.

A 3 a. TIMELINESS

All of the experimental material was timely in the sense that it was written within three years of the time of the experiment and that it discussed current issues. The readers' opinions about its timeliness was in some cases a different matter, as the negative ratio suggested.

Importance quarter. 2

Positive-negative ratio: 36+ : 64—

Expert opinions:

Reading should be based on and connected with the readers' immediate interests.¹³ Magazines should note and deal with "topics insistently clamoring for attention."¹³

¹⁰ See Chap. V, pp. 156-58. ¹¹ See Appendix I A, B 3 a.

¹² See Appendix I A, B 3 c. ¹³ See Appendix I A, A 3.

Classification of reader criticisms under TIMELINESS:

(1) Important current topic

(2) Information is old

A 3 b. SELECTION OF INFORMATION

Selection pertains to the criticisms of the inclusion or exclusion of certain information by the author. It differs from the following standard, for there opinions about the quality of information which has already been selected will be segregated.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 41+ : 59—

Evidence from this study:

"Interesting content" (i.e., well selected) ranked second among all of the reasons for preferring to read certain pamphlets first (snap judgment).¹⁴ The two pamphlets ranking highest with this comment were F and H. Some of the comments on the information expected in H and F were:

Interest in subject

Expect to find adequate information

Every one should know all about this subject

Suggest something new

Interesting reader comments:

Explanation of facts not generally known by average reader. Conditions reviewed too familiar to reader to hold his attention.

Classification of reader criticisms under SELECTION OF INFORMATION:

(1) Well selected

(2) Information or angle new

(3) Pertinent

(4) Good subject

(5) Important subject

(1) Superfluous

(2) Information trite, ordinary, obvious

(3) Irrelevant

(4) Dull subject

(5) Trivial

A 3 c. QUALITY OF INFORMATION

The criticisms classified under *quality of information* are first, those that describe the content without qualification, and second, those that are definitely concerned with the kind of information in pamphlets. Criticisms that contain *information* as one of their minor elements are generally classified elsewhere. For instance, the com-

¹⁴ See Appendix I B.

ment, "Information just stated, not explained" is placed under *expository techniques* rather than here.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 46+ : 54—

Evidence from this study:

In the snap judgment preference, the reason "comprehensive" ranked sixth in importance.¹⁵ The pamphlet with the most comments on this point was D. Those given were:

- Appears to have lots of facts
- Seems to have new information
- Appears thorough
- Appears to deal with problem as a whole
- Seems to cover field both intensively and extensively

The quality of information ranked second in importance in the general criticisms of pamphlets by readers.¹⁶

Classification of reader criticisms under QUALITY OF INFORMATION:

Statement of subject treated without qualification, i.e., "An account of causes of deflation."

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) True; scholarly | (1) Inaccurate; wrong |
| (2) Thorough | (2) Inadequate; thin in ideas; |
| (3) Instructive; helpful | superficial; too detailed |
| (4) Comprehensive; authentic | (3) Author handles subject in- |
| (5) Excellent analysis; gets at | capably |
| root of difficulty; points | (4) Causes not analyzed; author |
| specific | falls down on details |

B. FORM

The standards classified under form are:

B. Form

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Difficulty | 3. Literary techniques |
| a. Terms | a. Dramatic |
| b. Concepts | b. Expository |
| c. Abstractness | c. Figures of speech |
| d. Condensation | 4. Format |
| 2. Literary quality | a. Type |
| a. Organization | b. Size of book |
| b. Form and grammar | c. Cover and illustrations |
| c. Vitality | d. Footnotes, index, and |
| d. Rhythm and fluency | table of contents |
| e. Concise, simple language | e. Sections and captions |
| f. Adult approach | f. Title of book |
| | g. Make-up of book |

¹⁵ See Appendix I B. ¹⁶ See Appendix I C.

B I. DIFFICULTY

Although difficulty has received more experimental attention from other investigators than has any of the other technical phases of reading, the factors which actually cause difficulty in reading are still elusive. Important causes of difficulty are considered here to be difficulty of terms and of concepts, degrees of abstractness and of condensation.

Evidence from other experiments:

Until recently attention has largely been centered upon the grammatical elements of components of the printed page, particularly words. Counts of several million words have been made to determine which occur most often and are therefore probably the best understood by general readers [27].

Dale and Tyler [31] have studied other possible causes of difficulty by analyzing not only words but complexity of sentences, number of personal pronouns (as a measure of informality), per cent of monosyllabic words and other elements which were found to show little statistical relationship to difficulty of comprehension.

After much experimentation with the relative influence of different factors upon difficulty, Washburne and his assistants combined three of the most important mechanical factors into a formula and chart [29]. The formula is intended to be applied to children's books. Gray has prepared a more complex formula, consisting of five elements with two constants for predicting difficulty for adults with limited reading ability [33, pp. 137-139].

Two theses illustrate an attempt to analyse difficulty in broader terms. Carroll [30] derived his experimental data from children who read directions for performing acts and answered questions about the directions. He listed five main factors producing errors in comprehension:

"How-many-ness (arithmetical calculation) stimulates a random search for the answer."

Prepotent factor or word

Sentence containing conditional clauses

Too compact sentences or statements

Ideas merely implied, not clearly stated

Irion's study [34] is significant in that it analyses the factors of literary comprehension carefully and prepares tests for each of the points discovered. His analysis follows:

| | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| | | IA1. Word knowledge |
| | IA. Narrow reading comprehension | 2. Knowledge of expressions |
| | | 3. Ability to get specific facts |
| I. Reading comprehension | IB. Broad reading comprehension | IB1. Ability to see main points and conclusions |
| Literary comprehension | | IIA. General information |
| | II. Ability to interpret, to make applications | |

He found that word knowledge was an important item in reading comprehension, but that it was not nearly as important in the total (or broad) comprehension as in the narrow (or specific) comprehension.

The most detailed work on difficulty of reading for adults has been done by Gray and Leary. Eighty different variants which might be related to difficulty were enumerated, of which sixty-four were capable of quantitative analysis. The method of analysis was to count the number of occurrences of each variant in a reading passage and to correlate the frequency of the percentage with a difficulty score made on that passage by seventeen hundred adults. Five elements with the highest correlations were combined in a formula for predicting the difficulty of books. The formula was immediately utilized to analyse the difficulty of 350 books that are commonly used in adult education [33, pp. 12-13, 138, 339-350].

Evidence from this study:

Difficulty was surveyed from several angles in this study. First, reader criticisms were classified under four heads, terms, concepts, abstractness, and condensation. Second, the twelve pamphlets were ranked according to the grade assigned by application of the Winnetka formula.¹⁷ Third, the ranks for difficulty were correlated with ranks for pamphlet preference, with a correlation of .09.¹⁸ Fourth, an analysis of preference for the easiest, average and hardest pamphlets in each of the four series showed that the easiest were generally liked least, and the average in difficulty liked best.¹⁹ Fifth,

¹⁷ See Chap. V, Table XII. ¹⁸ See Chap. V, Table XX.

¹⁹ See Chap. V, p. 134.

readers ranked the pamphlets in each series in order of difficulty. They recognized three of those ranked easiest by the formula and assigned the same ranks as the formula to three other pamphlets. Their order of ranking disagreed with the formula on half of the twelve pamphlets, suggesting that these well educated readers had another basis for judging difficulty than the vocabulary and sentence structure on which the formula for school children was based.²⁰

Sixth, a group of eight members that had been to college two years or less was compared with another sub-group possessing postgraduate degrees to discover the relation of differences in pamphlet preference to variations in pamphlet difficulty. The contrast between the two sub-groups was marked when the readers' own estimate of difficulty was the basis of comparison. The less educated group rated the easiest pamphlets most interesting in every series and the hardest pamphlets least interesting in three of the four series. In contrast, the group with postgraduate degrees preferred the hardest pamphlet in each of the four series. We may conclude that even when the education far exceeded that needed for comprehending the pamphlets, groups with different educational backgrounds disagreed in their attitude toward easy and hard pamphlets.²¹

B I 2. TERMS

The readers in this study made surprisingly few criticisms of the difficulty of terms, considering the relative importance of words as found in most of the studies of difficulty. All specific comments on definition of words are grouped under terms. Here are also placed appraisals of colloquialisms. The general comments upon difficulty are classified under the next standard.

Importance quarter: 3

Positive-negative ratio: 22+ : 78—

Evidence from other experiments:

Three types of studies of terms, from the many that have been made, have a bearing upon adult reading. One is a discovery of the vocabulary range in ordinary reading material for adults. The second is an analysis of the difficulties that adults have in reading. A third searches for the influence of vocabulary upon difficulty.

The first type is illustrated in a study by Witty and La Brant [28]. They calculated the percentage of words from the various divisions of the Thorndike Word List in each of twelve adult books, includ-

²⁰ See Chap. V, p. 131.

²¹ See Chap. V, pp. 138 f.

ing inferior and superior fiction. Ninety per cent of all of the words were in the first five thousand of frequency. Zane Grey and Harold Bell Wright's masterpieces possessed a vocabulary difficulty equal to books by James Barrie and Edith Wharton, and were more difficult than other books rated as classics.

Second, Kepner [24] shows a technique for obtaining estimates of vocabulary inadequacies in specific fields. Seventeen social studies teachers recorded all of the words which in the course of teaching it was evident were not understood by fifty per cent or more of their students. Kepner analyzed the lists that the teachers submitted. He found that forty-eight per cent of the words were less frequent than Thorndike's first ten thousand; that fifty-three per cent were unspecialized words, while the remaining forty-seven per cent dealt with the language of the social studies.

The third type is best exemplified by Gray and Leary [33, p. 115], who found that out of forty-four potential elements of difficulty, four of the five most important elements dealt with easy or hard words. In regard to the four elements related to terms, the correlations between average test scores made by all readers and the percentage of easy words in selected passages was .522, between scores and number of words not known to ninety per cent of sixth grade pupils .520, between scores and number of easy words .513, and between scores and number of different hard words .496.

Expert opinions:

Any difficult words should be given repeated definition and illustration.²² Writing should on the whole be non-technical. But occasional technical words are liked, if they are made meaningful.²³

Classification of reader criticisms under TERMS:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) Colloquial language good | (1) Objection to slang |
| (2) Good definition of terms | (2) Not enough definition |
| (3) Easy words | (3) Do not understand terms |

B 1 b. CONCEPTS

The dictionary definition of a concept as an idea or a complex of characters implies a realm of experience to which the reader is or is not accustomed. All general remarks pertaining to difficulty of reading materials are classified here.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 17+ : 83—

²² See Appendix I A, F 3. ²³ See Appendix I A, F 4.

Evidence from other experiments:

Murphy [35] analyzed the richness of concepts in the vocabulary of twenty people, ten of whom were good readers and ten of whom were poor. He concluded: "The concept appears to play a role in reading ability from the point of view of organization, clarity and accuracy. The investigation has not demonstrated, however, that general variations or differences in the richness of concepts are of any particular importance as variants of reading ability."

Expert opinions:

Authors should take into account differences in concepts as distinct from vocabulary limitations.²⁴

Interesting reader comments:

Basic theme vividly and clearly presented in non-technical language.

Classification of reader criticisms under CONCEPTS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) Subject well defined | (1) Failed to define topic |
| (2) Too hard to read | (2) Too elementary |
| (3) Non-technical | (3) Technical; heavy |
| (4) Plainly written; easy style | (4) Not clear |

B I C. ABSTRACTNESS

The degree of abstractness of reading material is probably closely related to difficulty. In spite of the importance of abstractness, no studies that bore directly upon it were found. As classified here, the aspects of abstractness are largely negative. Its positive forms may be seen in some of the definitive phrases under concepts, vitality, dramatic techniques, and techniques of relating subject to reader.

Importance quarter: 3

Positive-negative ratio: 55+ : 45—

Expert opinions:

Take as concrete forms of the great problem as you can find.²⁵

Interesting reader comments:

Study made interesting by picture of actual facts and conditions. Newspaper inserts and examples help to visualize thought. Interesting transition from general problem to specific example. Too general to be interesting.

Classification of reader criticisms under ABSTRACTNESS:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) General statement followed by concrete examples | (1) Too abstract; vague; too general |
|--|---|

²⁴ See Appendix I A, A 4. ²⁵ See Appendix I A, B 4 b.

B 1 d. CONDENSATION

Condensation may be defined as the degree to which ideas are crowded together. The relation between condensation and difficulty is influenced more by the previous experience of the reader than most of the other standards in this list. A reader who has never before seen a given idea expressed may consider a paragraph where it is discussed too condensed; someone who has a passing acquaintance with the idea may say that the treatment is excellent; and a student of the subject might prefer a single sentence to the developed paragraph.

The criticisms classified under condensation were frequently encountered in the experiment. students who were familiar with the concepts in a pamphlet considered it too wordy or repetitious, while readers with no background for the reading wanted more explanations, or said that the ideas were too closely crowded together. Those criticisms may be seen in the classification.

Importance quarter* 1

Positive-negative ratio: 18+ : 82—

Expert opinions:

It is important to recognize that it is not sufficient just to state a problem. Each person must understand and feel the problem as it looks to others.²⁶ Writing should be repetitious.²⁷

Interesting reader comments:

Says nothing, and says it in a diffused way. A bushel of chaff with a handful of ideas. Repetition makes the writing more effective. No cramming of materials. Explains object in a few words. Too garrulous. Big subject crowded for space. Touches too many subjects.

Classification of reader criticisms under CONDENSATION:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) Explains point in few words | (1) Too many words; too brief |
| | (2) Too much repetition |
| | (3) Too crowded in ideas; hurried |

B 2. LITERARY QUALITY

The general classification, literary quality, might also be called the "style of writing," since most of the criteria of style that are taught in a course in writing are included here. The first two topics under literary quality are related to the formal aspects of writing, the

²⁶ See Appendix I A, B 2 b.

²⁷ See Appendix I A, F 3.

second two to vividness and skill in expression, and the last two to special qualifications of the style of expository material.

B 2 a. ORGANIZATION

Under organization are classified reader comments relating to the arrangement and to the unity or coherence of a piece of writing.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 37+ : 63—

Interesting reader comments:

Author deviates and leaves reader at a loss. Manifest coherence and unification of main theme. Author deceives reader by keeping facts scattered. Author belatedly picks up thread of argument in obscure manner. Arrangement of material uninteresting.

Classification of reader criticisms under ORGANIZATION:

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Shows unity | (1) Disjointed; incoherent |
| (2) Direct, to the point | (2) Main topic sidetracked |
| (3) Systematic arrangement; good correlation | (3) Lacks organization; uninteresting arrangement |

B 2 b. FORM AND GRAMMAR

In the minds of the experimental readers, grammar pertains to the use of words, and form to the structure of sentences or paragraphs. Good grammar was assumed and was not commented upon; but good form was occasionally mentioned.

Importance quarter: 3

Positive-negative ratio: 32+ : 68—

Evidence from this study:

One of the twelve pamphlets was written in language that was considered powerful and effective by one group, but labeled tabloid, slang, or bad grammar by another. A sample chosen at random from the pamphlet follows:

However, the crash is a crash. Day after day, stocks are going down. The little fellows become panicky. Soon they sell for eighty cents what they paid one hundred cents for. Stocks keep tobogganning. Pray, can I have sixty, fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, ten cents for the dollar I paid you, cries (*sic*) the poor little fellows with their all in stocks or on stocks. [50, p. 24.]

Probably no other pamphlet brought such sharp reactions as K, from which the above sample is extracted. It is evident that if a writer wants to draw attention, he will talk colloquially, without

much consideration of sentence construction. Here are two readers' opinions of pamphlet K:

- (1) A rip-snorting, two-fisted pamphlet that has something to say and says it. I don't entirely agree with the solution, but the pamphlet is good, *good!* I have enjoyed it heartily.
- (2) Of all the pamphlets I have ever read this is the worst. Exaggeration is rampant, and too often appeals to the heart instead of the head. The reading is terribly boring.

Classification of reader criticisms under FORM AND GRAMMAR:

Simple statement concerning: presence of question, premises, example carried through several paragraphs, climax, etc.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Interesting form | (1) Too much outline form |
| (2) Sentence structure good | (2) Sentences poor, too long |
| | (3) Poor grammar |

B 2 C. VITALITY

Vitality is a term borrowed from the American Library Association to denote that "indescribable something" without which a book is boring and with which it is charming. Often it is impossible to preserve for microscopic examination the most important emotions that a book induces. Vitality has not been dissected, but is represented by descriptive phrases in the classification.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 47+ : 53—

Expert opinions:

Finally there is this most essential quality—vitality. Mere correctness of language is not sufficient. The book that will hold the casual reader will reflect the enthusiasm of the author in his subject and will bear witness of his understanding of the psychology of his reader.²⁸

Interesting reader comments:

Racy style holds interest. Good style; reads like a travel book. Subject dry; no attempt to make it interesting. Style is inflexible; reading difficult because of monotonous presentation.

Classification of reader criticisms under VITALITY:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) Well worded statements; good style | (1) Poor style; badly written |
| (2) Spicy; colorful; racy; conversational | (2) Shoddy; formal; dead; dry; stereotyped |

²⁸ See Appendix I A, C 4.

B 2 d. RHYTHM AND FLUENCY

Rhythm and fluency were important according to the opinion of experts; but the readers mentioned the standard infrequently.

Importance quarter: 4

There were only four section comments, 2+ and 2—

Expert opinions:

When writing for immature people, rhythm is a most essential feature.²⁹

Classification of reader criticisms under RHYTHM AND FLUENCY:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) Progresses smoothly and evenly | (1) No progression |
| (2) Moves rapidly | (2) Does not move rapidly |

B 2 e. CONCISE, SIMPLE LANGUAGE

The criterion, concise, simple language, has been well defined by Walter Hines Page in the excerpt given in "expert opinions." Reader opinions are classified under this head when the comment is concerned with simplicity in connection with enjoyability of reading rather than with difficulty.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 88+ : 12—

Expert opinions:

And when it came to style—terseness, directness, simplicity. He loved one or two syllabled Anglo-Saxon words. Walter Page was the enemy of the diffuse. He would say, "Do you realize that the story of the creation of the world, the biggest thing that ever took place, was told in a single paragraph?"³⁰

Eighty-six and two-fifths per cent of all the world's fights and arguments occur because the contestants have failed to define the words over which they clash. The great tragedy of violence is that when the dead and wounded are counted it will often be discovered that many of the slain need not have died at all if only they had understood the other fellow's language. . . . What this nation and every other needs is a good collection of five-cent words. Half-dollar and two-bit words make for misunderstanding and strife.³¹

Classification of reader criticisms under CONCISE SIMPLE LANGUAGE:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| (1) Clear; concise; easy to read | (1) Style too hard; too involved; no force |
|----------------------------------|---|

²⁹ See Appendix I A, C 1.

³⁰ See Appendix I A, C 2.

³¹ See Appendix I A, C 2.

B 2 f. ADULT APPROACH

The importance of this standard is 3, rather than 4, because of the frequency with which expert opinion cited the need for an adult approach.

The criticisms that are directed toward the author's patronizing attitude are classified under adult approach. Another type of objection to the author's style, expressed as "too elementary," is classified under difficulty of concepts (B 1 b) rather than here.

Importance quarter: 3

Only 2 reasons, both negative

Expert opinions:

Talk not down but across to the reader. Treat him as an intelligent person.³²

Interesting reader comments:

Written in a superior tone that reads like a school teacher lecturing to kindergartners. Attempt to write down takes away dignity.

Classification of reader criticisms under ADULT APPROACH:

- (1) Obvious appeal to ignorant, poor attempt at writing down

B 3. LITERARY TECHNIQUES

The specific methods that authors use in their endeavor to make their exposition clear, interesting, and vivid are classified under literary techniques. The three ways in which authors are considered to do this are by using dramatic techniques, expository techniques, and figures of speech.

B 3 a. DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES

The term dramatic is used in a wide sense to include such methods of putting life into facts as stories, examples, comparisons, and contrast.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 85+ : 15—

Evidence from other experiments:

Snyder [36] paired over three hundred junior high school children for intelligence and gave them two forms of the same material. The material was a lesson about money, one form written factually and the other dramatically. A test given immediately afterwards and re-

³² See Appendix I A, B 2 a.

peated two months later showed that the knowledge of the two groups, reading different forms, was practically the same according to several different measures. At the end of the time each group was given the other form to read, to choose the more interesting one. Seventy-six per cent preferred the story.

Expert opinions:

In editing a school newspaper we have found that longer, more interesting presentations of news events are preferred to pithy, factual ones.³³ A writer must study his group before choosing a technique. Stories often repel highly educated people, while they are necessary to gain the attention of the less educated.³⁴

Interesting reader comments:

The typical example used was dramatic and effective. Quotation lends support to convincing thought in conclusion. Story embellishment makes it saccharine. Devotes too much space to the story and not enough to facts.

Classification of reader criticisms under DRAMATIC TECHNIQUES:

(a) Examples

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Vivid; typical; rich with evidence | (1) Too many; illustrations irrelevant |
|--|--|

(b) Story method

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Good way to depict conditions; makes facts easy | (1) Unreal; interferes with necessary details |
|---|---|

(c) Comparison

- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| (1) Good | (1) Too far-fetched |
|----------|---------------------|

B 3 b. EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

Readers in this study requested more often that explanations be good than that they be dramatic, although both dramatic and expository techniques ranked high in importance. In a few instances the negative criticisms called for dramatization, but they generally asked that statements be explained more fully.

Criticisms of readers that express ease or difficulty of understanding due to the explanation, that deal with the interest of facts to the reader, or that describe the method of explanation employed, belong under expository techniques.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 65+ : 35-

³³ See Appendix I A, B 1 b.

³⁴ See Appendix I A, B 1 d.

Evidence from this study:

After the reader had finished a series of pamphlets he was asked to rank all three in his order of preference for them, and then to rank them again in answer to the question, "Which meets your own needs as far as explanations go?"

The agreement between explanations and order of preference was much greater than between preference and any other factor rated by them. In this study "good explanation" was proved to be the strongest determinant of preference which was investigated.³⁵

Classification of reader criticisms under EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) Easy to understand; difficult subject simply explained | (1) Facts just stated, not explained |
| (2) Vivid array of facts in simple language | (2) Plain statements; true but dull; no trimmings |
| (3) Well and clearly explained; detailed | (3) Badly explained; ambiguous; not clear |
| (4) Gives specific reasons; good review; answers one question well | (4) Merely recapitulation of foregoing |

B 3 C. FIGURES OF SPEECH

Comments upon figures of speech occurred rarely, but were of sufficient frequency to merit a separate category.

In reviewing the section comments for a particular paragraph, the writer was interested to see that a figure of speech had been applauded under five different labels. The important fact was not that the author had used a metaphor or hyperbole or parable, but that he had effectively caught the reader's attention.

Importance quarter: 4

Positive-negative ratio: 67+ : 33—

Classification of reader criticisms under FIGURES OF SPEECH:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| (1) Good use of analogy, premise and conclusions; of hyperbole, simile, metaphor, paradox | (1) Too many hyperboles, etc. |
|---|-------------------------------|

B 4. FORMAT

The reader's comments on format were few but pointed. The subconscious influence of the appearance of pages, quality of paper, and so on, upon readers' judgments may be greater than their infrequent comments would suggest. All criticisms of the style of the page, the footnotes, illustrations, etc., are grouped under format.

³⁵ See Chap. V, p. 130, and Table XVIII.

Evidence from this study:

The experimental readers were asked to rank each series of three pamphlets on "the most attractive in the kind and size of print used and in the appearance of the page." They agreed more closely among themselves about the order of ranking pamphlets on appearance than on any other of five qualities that they ranked. The relationship between the readers' ranking of preference for each series and of appearance was negligible.

Inspection of the four highest ranking and the four lowest ranking pamphlets in appearance led to the following generalizations: glossy paper and average size of type are definitely better liked than rough grayish paper and small type.³⁶

B 4 a. TYPE

While many experiments have been made to discover the proper size and blackness of type, the experimental readers indicated by the infrequency of their criticisms that type was not important to them.

Importance quarter: 3

Positive-negative ratio: 17+ : 83—

Evidence from other experiments:

In 1926, Pyke [40] summarized over two hundred studies in legibility which had been performed in England and America. In other words, a quantity of research on this topic has been done. Gates [37] believes that much of it has been fruitless because the investigators have set up artificial conditions which do not correspond with ordinary reading methods, and because they have not taken into account other causative factors. One important factor, he says, is that of habit: we read most easily what we have been accustomed to read.

To test this hypothesis, Gates used two groups of children who were beginning to read. One group read lines of the usual length, 100 to 102 millimeters, all year. The other read materials ranging in line length from 55 to 175 mm. At the end of the year the first group showed definitely greater speed on the 100 mm. lines; the second group could read lines of any length with the same speed.

Hovde [38] set out to discover differences in rate of reading with different sizes of type and different leading (space between lines). The material was set up as a serial story, each incident separate, but all extracts from the interesting "We" by Lindbergh. The material

³⁶ See Chap. III, p. 45, and Appendix IV B.

was set up twice, the first time with variations in type and leading running from 1 to 16, the next time in reverse order, 16 to 1. The surprising discovery was that "the order of the context far outweighs mechanical features in influencing reading rate, or legibility." There was no perceptible order of ease from smallest to largest type. The readers said that they preferred larger type and wider leading, but their opinions rarely agreed with their fastest reading rates.

In spite of these adverse findings, Paterson and Tinker [39] thought that there must be some outer limits to desirability in size of type and line length. They conducted wide experiments with tests standardized for the purpose, and reached these conclusions:

10 point type was read somewhat faster than other sizes.

Lines should be between 70 and 90 mm. in length.

Both line length and type size should be balanced to have proper conditions for legibility. 8 point type in 72 mm. line length and 10 point type in 80 mm. line length were comparatively good.

Evidence from this study:

Each series of three pamphlets was ranked by the readers upon attractiveness of type.³⁷ The four most attractive pamphlets, those that ranked first in each series, and the four least attractive, ranking third, were examined to see whether the readers had a common standard when they selected one class and rejected the other. The four most attractive pamphlets had heavier type and more leading than the four least attractive. Two of the least attractive pamphlets were ordinary in type. The other two had much smaller type than any of the other twelve pamphlets; one of these had insets and footnotes of still smaller type.³⁸

Classification of reader criticisms under TYPE:

(1) Good use of italics

(2) Type not clear

(3) Type too small

B 4 b. SIZE OF BOOK

Under size of book are classified criticisms of the number of pages, of the area of a book, and of the book's length in relation to the time that a person may spend in reading. Some experts who expressed opinions feel that one standard of exposition should be physical brevity of articles.

Importance quarter: 3

No comments in section reactions

³⁷ See Chap. V, Table XVII. ³⁸ See Chap. V, p. 146.

Evidence from this study:

When readers stated under snap judgments which pamphlet in a series they would like to read first, one of the reasons they gave for their choice was the size of the pamphlet.³⁹ Four pamphlets were chosen by six readers in snap judgment because of their size; they were all a little smaller than average among the twelve.

Expert opinions:

Brevity of statement is important so that the ordinary person may learn through short expositions of a great many subjects his contribution to and intrinsic place in modern life.⁴⁰

Classification of reader criticisms under SIZE OF BOOK:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| (1) Interesting because long and detailed | (1) Bulky report unattractive |
| (2) Can be read in short time | |
| (3) Attractive because short | |

B 4 C. COVER AND ILLUSTRATION

Criticisms by readers of the various "art features" are grouped together under cover and illustrations.

Importance quarter: 2
2 positive comments, 2 negative

Evidence from other experiments:

Mellinger [46] found that children of three ages (six, eight, ten) preferred realistic colored pictures to conventionalized black and white ones.

Evidence from this study:

"Attractive cover" ranked fourth as a cause for snap judgment preference.⁴¹ Of the two most often mentioned pamphlets the readers said:

K—Intriguing; print and cover attractive; cartoon (on cover) impressive and forceful; make-up attracts attention.

F—Attractive layout of cover; neat; colorful and appealing.

Expert opinions:

Far more attention should be paid to choice and reproduction of pictures. Illustrative material has been all but overlooked for educational purposes.⁴²

³⁹ See Appendix I B.

⁴⁰ See Appendix I A, B 3 a.

⁴¹ See Appendix I B.

⁴² See Appendix I A, E 3.

Classification of reader criticisms under COVER AND ILLUSTRATIONS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| (1) Colorful | |
| (2) Cartoon impressive, forceful | (2) Need pictures to clarify explanation |

B 4 d. FOOTNOTES, INDEX, AND TABLE OF CONTENTS

The footnotes, index, and table of contents were evidently not widely used by the experimental group. These qualities of format would doubtless hold more importance for readers using materials as references or textbooks.

Importance quarter: 4

Positive-negative ratio: 33+ : 67-

Evidence from this study:

Two readers selected books to read first because they had a "promising table of contents."⁴³

Classification of reader criticisms under FOOTNOTES, INDEX, etc.

(All of the section and general comments concerned footnotes)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) Well footnoted for the serious reader | (1) Footnotes kill interest; over-use of notes and quotes |
|---|---|

B 4 e. SECTIONS AND CAPTIONS

Most textbooks, as well as pamphlets, are divided into sub-chapters or sections. Any reader criticisms of the section divisions or of their captions are classified under B 4 e.

Importance quarter: 4

2 positive comments, 2 negative

Interesting reader comments:

Titles for each section anticipate not only subject, but purpose of discussing it. Dynamic titles. Sections should have been joined, for all deal with same thought. Sections much too small, too dependent on each other.

Classification of reader criticisms under SECTIONS AND CAPTIONS:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Section captions interesting | |
| | (2) Sections too small |

B 4 f. TITLE OF BOOK

The title was the major influence upon the experimental readers' preliminary selection of a book. Authors and editors recognize the importance of good titles, as evidence of other experiments shows.

Importance quarter: 3

2 negative comments

⁴³ See Appendix I B.

Evidence from other experiments:

The most dramatic report of the influence of the title is given by Haldeman-Julius [48]. He is the editor of "The Little Blue Books" which are bought from a check list of titles. The title is the book's only advertisement. He gives many stories of books that had practically no sale till the title was "pepped up". He says that key words for titles are "The Truth about . . .", "Life . . .", "How to . . .". Descriptive phrases should follow names in biographies, as "Robert Ingersoll, Benevolent Agnostic". People are generally more interested in ideas than in personalities, according to his experience.

Hart [49] analyzed ten best selling novels and concluded that "the fiction reader likes best, apparently, those titles which arouse curiosity without at once revealing their significance. The title should be closely related to the theme of the novel, however, if it is to satisfy the reader."

Brome [47] quoted the interest of several authors in titles. Maxwell thought his best title to be "Spinster of this Parish" because "the phrase is familiar and flows easily, it suggests the compass of the story in four words, none of which is clumsy."

Evidence from this study:

The title led in importance for determining snap judgment preferences.⁴⁴ Some comments on the most often mentioned titles were:

"Unemployment and its Remedies"—Seems to suggest that remedies for situation are given. Hits the problem on the head. Suggests a discussion of current evils. Suggests remedies, not reliefs. Sounds constructive.

"Inflation and Your Money" (sub-title: "A story of money that everyone can understand")—It purports to be a story. *Your* money is provocative. Title promises an understandable history of a subject that is rarely presented simply. From the title I am led to believe that I may be able to see the connection between my money and inflation.

"Fight Against War"—Challenging. Carries force. Catches the eye. Sounds emotional and not abstract.

Classification of reader criticisms under TITLE OF BOOK:

- (1) Challenging, constructive;
hits an important problem

- (2) Slang in title looks bad
(3) Title is misleading
(4) Not appealing

⁴⁴ See Appendix I B.

B 4 g. MAKE-UP OF BOOK

Under make-up of book quality of paper, binding and any other general criticism of the make-up should be classified.

Importance quarter: 4

No section comments

Evidence from other experiments:

The make-up of books is a technical question on which printers have assembled the best experimental evidence. The Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry has issued and kept up-to-date the "Tappi Standards," "a loose leaf manual of tentative and official testing practices that have received recognition by the Technical Association." [43] This association assembles scientifically tested information on permanence and durability of paper, qualities of different types of binding, and other qualities of make-up.

Evidence from this study:

Under snap judgments pamphlets P and Q were each preferred once because they were "well made books."⁴⁵

Classification of reader criticisms under MAKE-UP OF BOOK.

(1) Well made book

(1) Poorly made book

C. CATCHING AND HOLDING READER INTEREST

After careful deliberation, catching and holding reader interest was given a separate classification. It overlaps somewhat with other standards and, in some respects, is more generalized than the majority of them. An analysis of the methods under this standard, however, should show more clearly than methods under other standards how to obtain the qualities that make satisfactory reading. It, with its subdivisions, was therefore drawn apart for examination and definition.

The standards that occur under this topic are:

C. Catching and holding reader interest

1. Introduction
 - a. Outline of plan
 - b. Awaking interest
2. Conclusion
 - a. Summary
 - b. Outcome of reader interest
3. Techniques for relating subject to reader
4. Emotional appeal
5. Use of famous author's name

⁴⁵ See Appendix I B.

C I. INTRODUCTION

In the classification the term introduction generally applies merely to the first section or chapter. Occasionally there are books with such definite changes of content that interest must be aroused anew in the middle; then comments in the body of the book about the introduction of new topics would also be included under introduction. For example, in one pamphlet, where three different economic systems were described, the few remarks at the beginning of each new description were classed as introductory.

Many of the criticisms of the introduction are not classified here, for they pertain to one of the other standards of judgment. Only the criticisms that tell how the introduction is made or that cite methods used by the author to awaken interest are included under introduction.

Evidence from this study:

On the whole, introductions seemed to be popular. Six of the twelve were among the best liked sixteen per cent of sections read. Only one of the introductions was the least popular section in its pamphlet. Two were among the two most popular in their booklets. In other words, two-thirds of the introductions were very well liked.

C I a. OUTLINE OF PLAN

Criticisms aroused by the author's method of indicating the proposed content of the pamphlets are included under outline of plan.

Importance quarter: 4

Positive-negative ratio. 88+ : 12—

Interesting reader comments:

Goes right to heart of the subject, thus arousing reader interest. Slow in getting to point. Plan and object of book fully discussed.

Classification of reader criticisms under OUTLINE OF PLAN:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| (1) Definite statement of plan and purpose | (1) Purpose remains obscure |
| (2) Gives setting for following; raises questions to be answered | |

C I b. AWAKENING INTEREST

The techniques used by the author to awaken interest brought more comments than did his method of introducing the subject.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 76+ : 24—

Interesting reader comments:

Zestfulness of beginning makes reader want to go on. Relationship to reader at once dwelt upon.

Classification of reader criticisms under AWAKENING INTEREST:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) Simple explanation of hard subject | (1) Technical; stress on difficulty is forbidding |
| (2) Promises interesting discussion; relation to reader stated; provokes curiosity | |
| (3) Clear-cut; catchy, enthusiastic | (3) Weak; bad; not alive |
| (4) Easy stages; directly to the point | (4) Too abrupt; too slow; too hurried; too long |

C 2. CONCLUSION

Although conclusion refers in most cases to the last portion of the book, the term may sometimes be broadened to include the end of sections or chapters, if the summaries there mark a definite period to a train of thought. Only those criticisms that apply specifically to conclusions and that can be classified under summary or outcome of interest belong under C 2.

Evidence from this study:

Conclusions were not as popular as introductions. Five of the twelve were among the sixteen per cent of most popular sections. Only three were the most popular sections in their respective pamphlets. Three were among the sixteen per cent least popular. One was the least liked section in its pamphlet.

C 2 a. SUMMARY OF BOOK

Classified under summary are remarks concerning the author's method of concluding his pamphlet, opinions about effective devices for summarizing, and criticisms of the quality of the summary.

Importance quarter: 3

Positive-negative ratio: 67+ : 33—

Classification of reader criticisms under SUMMARY OF BOOK:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| (1) Summary comprehensive; detailed; short | (1) Questions not answered |
| (2) Ties all loose ends to original thought | (2) Not unified; does not summarize |
| (3) Strong | (3) Weak |
| (4) Review directly involves reader | |

C 2 b. OUTCOME OF READER INTEREST

The success of reading material may be judged to some extent by its after-effects. These experimental pamphlets were selected with the hope that they might be introductory to more extended reading for some of the experimental group. It was therefore interesting to note, in the first place, whether readers felt they had obtained any new ideas or suggestions from the pamphlets and, in the second place, whether any readers expressed an intention to follow the subject with further thought, study, or action.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 79+ . 21—

Interesting reader comments:

(All of these comments are taken from the general criticisms, at which point this standard is applied more fully than in the section reactions.)

Questions not answered. No solution given. Does not clear up questionable statements. Provides much rational food for thought. Should be subject of a debate. Interesting because of proposed method for accomplishing hoped-for end. A good introduction to subject. No enlightenment on topic. Not one practical suggestion made for solution of immediate national problems. Quo vadis?

Classification of reader criticisms under OUTCOME OF READER INTEREST:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| (1) Good solution, raises new questions | (1) Problems not solved |
| (2) Predicts | (2) Doesn't explain solutions |
| (3) Suggests further thought and study | (3) Too much like home-work |
| (4) Practical | (4) Impractical; hypothetical |
| (5) Constructive appeal to action | |

C 3. TECHNIQUES FOR RELATING SUBJECT TO READER

Even though the subject of a treatise be of great importance, special means should be employed by authors to insure readers' appreciation of it. Authors may catch the attention of readers by telling stories, using italics, giving clear explanations, or making wise use of any other of the thirty-eight qualities that readers demand in their reading. The authors of the experimental pamphlets used fourteen different techniques for relating their subjects to the reader.

The only criticisms which should be grouped under techniques for

relating subject to reader are the readers' responses to the use of such techniques.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio: 59+ : 41—

Evidence from this study:

Several assistants in the experiment read each pamphlet carefully in order to determine what methods the author used "to catch and to hold the reader's interest." They found that several methods were employed in each pamphlet. All of the judgments of the assistants were synthesized by the writer into an analysis of the so-called "human interest" techniques. The analysis is listed for each pamphlet in Appendix III D. In addition to citing the methods in relation to pamphlets, the writer classified the methods under the standards in the Combined List of Criteria.

The list of the techniques for relating subject to reader that were used in the experimental pamphlets follows, with letter and numeral referring to the position of the technique in the Combined List of Criteria:

- A 1, 3—Supply of background and of facts.
 - 2 —Facts in graphic form.
 - B 1 —Simple language. Explicit definitions. Generalizing topic sentences, elaborated with concrete examples.
 - 2 —Colloquial language. Conversational style. Colorful description.
 - 3 a —Story of a typical family. Comparison to show good and weak points, similarities and differences. Direct quotations in dialogue form.
 - b —Selection of important and effective thought.
 - c —Striking analogy in introduction.
 - 4 —Italics to emphasize important facts. Cartoon. Captions that suggest the thought. Content in quotation marks.
 - C 2 —Frequent summaries.
 - 4 —Account of suffering, loss of life. Use of emotional writing at strategic points. Ridicule.
 - D 1 —Author an expert, with a calm, scholarly attitude.
 - 2 —Unbiased arguments on both sides of the issue.
- Special techniques that could only be grouped under C 3.
- C 3 —Questions that relate reader's experience to problem under discussion. Emphasis on universality of consequences.

Interesting reader comments:

Could imagine myself one of the characters in the story. Fails to humanize facts presented. Points to direct relation with "me." Hits vital question in my mind.

Classification of reader criticisms under TECHNIQUES FOR RELATING
SUBJECT TO READER:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Problems vital to reader | (1) Reader not interested in subject |
| (2) Direct appeal to reader; question directed at him; questions and examples of human interest | (2) No conscious appeal to reader; no human interest |
| (3) Problem lives; personal style | (3) Too academic; too realistic |

C 4. EMOTIONAL APPEAL

Most of the criticisms that mention the author's emotion are easily identified under this heading. Although the "calling of names" is generally classified under emotional appeal, some descriptions of the author are placed under influence on reader, and a few under information. That is, if the opinion reads, "The author is a liar," it is placed under emotional appeal; if it says, "The data presented are contrary to known facts," it is placed under information. "The author does not convince me of his sincerity" would be placed under influence on reader. In the main, then, emotional reactions toward the author and his book are grouped under emotional appeal.

Importance quarter: 1

Positive-negative ratio. 67+ : 33—

Evidence from this study:

Although the section reactions in the above ratio showed a balance of positive commendations of forms of emotional appeal, the general criticisms showed an opposite tendency. Since a detailed classification of general criticisms was not kept, the exact proportion of positive to negative criticisms was not known; but it was over fifty per cent negative. The interpretation of this fact may be that, although certain injections of emotion may be liked in reading, a definitely emotional pamphlet arouses more unfavorable than favorable comments.

Interesting reader comments:

Author shows ability to communicate deeply rooted emotions. A lofty appeal, but lacks force and substance. Author is trying to browbeat his own instincts into reader. Strong emotional tone gives color and warmth to context.

Classification of reader criticisms under EMOTIONAL APPEAL:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Author keeps discussion controlled; without heat | (1) Not much enthusiasm shown; facts cold; no enthusiasm |
| (2) Appeal is heroic, patriotic, | (2) Appeal is a preachment, too |

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| convincing, stirring, elo- | idealistic, too depressing, too |
| quent, idealistic | enthusiastic, too bitter, |
| (3) Author is honest, sincere, | sarcastic |
| shows a keen sense of humor | |
| (4) Especially good ethics; uni- | |
| versal appeal of brotherhood; | |
| courageous expression of an | |
| ideal; reader made to feel | |
| situation | |
| | (5) Enthusiasm begins to wane |

C 5. USE OF FAMOUS AUTHOR'S NAME

Undoubtedly one of the editorial feats of showmanship is the display of a famous author. Editors may wonder how successful they have been in sustaining the interest they have aroused by publishing a book by a famous author; the success may be discovered by obtaining the criticisms of readers. In this study the use of a famous name aroused great interest in one pamphlet, but the interest was unjustified by the reading.

All criticisms that indicate a knowledge of the author's identity belong under famous author.

Importance quarter: 3

Only 2 comments, both positive

Evidence from this study:

Pamphlet F, by Einstein, was selected to be read first in its series far oftener than any other pamphlet. Seventy per cent placed it first under snap judgments. Only thirty-nine per cent liked it best of the three pamphlets after reading it.⁴⁶ The remarks of the famous author were placed in a favorable setting by the editor, who prefaced each selection with a note, a story, or a historical allusion; but other qualities than the famous author operated to defeat the popularity of the book.

"Familiar author" ranked second in snap judgments. Nineteen readers selected pamphlet F for this reason. Some of them said:

Acquainted with author's fairness

Curious about famous man's opinions on this subject

Aware of author's earnestness and sincerity

Author is acknowledged genius

Has international reputation for knowledge of subject

His opinions well worth reading

⁴⁶ See Chap. V, p. 127.

Classification of reader criticisms under USE OF FAMOUS AUTHOR'S NAME:

(Criticisms of the famous authors occurred so rarely that this standard should be eliminated as a major classification)

- (1) Interesting analysis of famous author's feelings and sentiments

D. DEALING WITH CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

The standards that are organized under dealing with controversial issues need not receive so much space in lists of standards which are not intended to be applied to current problem literature. They are important, however, in a wide area of study group material. The following standards are classified under D:

D. Techniques of controversy

1. Author's display of his own viewpoint
 - a. Non-partisan
 - b. Fair partisan
 - c. Prejudiced partisan
2. Techniques of controversy
 - a. Presentation of argument
 - b. Criticism
 - c. Influence on reader

D I. AUTHOR'S DISPLAY OF HIS OWN VIEWPOINT

In Chapter V (page 123) four possible types of an author's bias are described. Three of the four types of bias are used in the classification under *a*, *b*, and *c* below. The fourth type of bias, which was there described as the "salesman's view," i.e., an author who presents his own belief without referring to alternative views, may be variously classed under *b* or *c* as follows. If the reader's criticism says that the author's purpose is to instruct upon a subject that already has majority agreement, his criticism may be classified under fair partisan. If, on the other hand, the author gives the reader an impression that his is the only possible opinion, even though it is not generally accepted, or if the reader indicts him for propagandizing instead of educating, the criticism is classified with prejudiced partisan.

Evidence from this study:

In Chapter V, Table XXI, page 136, descriptions of bias are presented in order to compare the author's display of viewpoint with the reader's preference for pamphlets. Although those pamphlets which were described by assistants as prejudiced were on the whole

most popular, the readers disliked pamphlets written by authors who sponsored a cause without indicating any alternative beliefs.

D I a. NON-PARTISAN

The writer who is non-partisan examines all viewpoints without displaying a brief for any one of them, according to the definition in connection with the investigation of bias mentioned above. Criticisms by readers that indicate an author's impartiality are classified here.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio 67+ · 33—

Expert opinions:

The writer should give fair presentation to different points of view.⁴⁷ Current problems should be treated as non-propaganda when writing curriculum materials for adults.⁴⁷

Classification of reader criticisms under NON-PARTISAN:

(1) Maintains impartiality,
open minded

(1) No definite attitude; author
fails to register point of view

D I b. FAIR PARTISAN

In order to be considered a fair partisan the writer admits a bias for one side of the controversy. He treats the other side fairly, stating both its strong and its weak points. When the readers recognize this quality in an author, their comments are classified under fair partisan.

Importance quarter: 4

3 positive, 1 negative comment

Interesting reader comment:

Leans over to one side, but makes fair presentation.

Classification of reader criticisms under FAIR PARTISAN:

(1) Definite idea of how author
feels; shows generosity, is fair

(1) Information that only half
informs is dangerous

D I c. PREJUDICED PARTISAN

When the author is called a prejudiced partisan he may ignore other viewpoints completely, stating only the advantages of his position. Or he may show only the fallacies of other positions and only the strength of his own. Criticisms which challenge the author's prejudice are grouped under this standard.

⁴⁷ See Appendix I A, D 2.

Importance quarter: 3

Positive-negative ratio: 11+ : 89—

Interesting reader comments:

Author's purpose is to influence, not to instruct. Bias of author so evident that it is not interesting; reader not drawn to sympathize with author's views. Sounds like patent-medicine ad, yet interesting.

Classification of reader criticisms under PREJUDICED PARTISAN:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) Interesting "medicine advertisement" style | (1) Too biased; propaganda; point of view one-sided |
|--|---|

D 2. TECHNIQUES OF CONTROVERSY

All of the readers' criticisms which were classified above under author's viewpoint related only to his display of his own views. His general method of dealing with controversial subjects was of much greater importance to the experimental readers.

D 2 a. PRESENTATION OF ARGUMENT

When the reader criticizes the presentation of the argument, his own point of view sometimes prevents him from seeing clearly the author's intent in the argument. Under this heading reader opinions about the methods that the author used in argument are grouped.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 54+ : 46—

Interesting reader comments:

Author is muddled. Argumentation quite convincing regardless of emotional prejudice. Good scientific arguments to uphold author's contentions. Gives no reasons for conclusions. No stress is laid on important points. By interesting analysis derives a logical answer.

Classification of reader criticisms under PRESENTATION OF ARGUMENT:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (1) Point by point examination of opposing arguments | (1) Statements doubtful; author misinterprets; disregards truth |
| (2) Logical | (2) Illogical |
| (3) Intelligent; good reasoning | (3) Wrong emphasis; examples do not prove |

D 2 b. CRITICISMS

The readers' remarks about the author's manner of analysing other points of view are catalogued under criticism.

Importance quarter: 4

Positive-negative ratio: 86+ : 14—

Classification of reader criticisms under CRITICISM:

- | | |
|--|--|
| (1) Absence of destructive criticism and caustic manner | (2) Is unjust, merely vindictive abuse |
| (2) Is just, clear, fair, forceful, comprehensive, constructive in criticism | |

D 2 C. INFLUENCE ON READER

The essence of the standard, influence on reader, lies in the reader's expressing himself as convinced of, doubtful about, or opposed to the suggestions embodied in the pamphlet.

Importance quarter: 2

Positive-negative ratio: 55+ . 45—

Interesting reader comments:

Too idealistic and Utopian. Leaves reader with a blank feeling. Not dramatic enough to appeal to one not of author's opinion.

Classification of reader criticisms under INFLUENCE ON READER:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Good advice; difficult subject well treated | (1) Reader disagrees with author |
| (2) An appeal to reason | |
| (3) Convincing | (3) Not convincing; creates doubt |

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I A-1

CLASSIFICATION OF OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY EXPERTS IN BOOKS AND INTERVIEWS CONCERNING STANDARDS THAT READERS USE IN SELECTING READING MATTER

The following opinions about the standards for selecting reading matter were accumulated during interviews with adult educators, librarians and editors and in the course of reading many books and articles. Standards were tabulated from twenty-five sources. In cases where the standards were merely listed or mentioned without discussion, no reference is cited below. Listings are counted, however, in the frequency of the summary table (A-2).

Opinions about the determinants of the readability of books were not obtained in more detail because William S. Gray has already canvassed the field of opinion in an exhaustive questionnaire addressed to ninety librarians, editors, and adult educators.¹

Non-fiction reading material for adults should—

A. Recognize differing needs of readers:

1. Should touch on basic interests of all readers.

C 3*

By an abiding human interest I mean this: there are some things that everyone has in common with every other one. The man who makes our literature seizes upon the things that are universal, so that when the great product is put before you, you see that it appeals to you as if it were spoken or written for you alone.²

or 2. Should be of special interest to one or more groups.

C 3

We have found in the Y.W.C.A. that there must be standards for special groups rather than for all adults *en masse*. We differentiate on an occupational level.³

¹ Gray, William S. and Leary, Bernice. *What Makes a Book Readable*, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., 1935, Chap. II.

* Letters and numbers in italics refer to classification under the Combined List of Criteria.

² Hendrick, Burton J. *The Training of an American* (the earlier life and letters of Walter Hines Page), Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1928, p. 287.

³ Coyle, Grace, Laboratory Division, Y.W.C.A. *Interview*, June, 1928.

Non-fiction reading material for adults should—

A. Recognize differing needs of readers (Cont.):

3. Should be based on and intimately tied up with readers' immediate interests. A 3 a

. . . current topics insistently clamoring for attention.⁴

4. Should perceive differences in concepts, distinct from vocabulary difficulties. B 1 b

A German scientist in Darwin's time literally could not conceive of evolution. I talk to many groups that cannot comprehend the facts and demands of the concept of social change. Mary Van Kleeck doubts whether the individualistic middle class will ever be able to understand the idea of interdependence of the workers, let alone guide them or write for them.⁵

B. Aim to catch and hold the reader's interest.

1. By dramatic techniques. B 3 a

- a. A less highbrow magazine for parents than the present ones would put across its points by fiction, by representation of simple case stories, with pictures and records of group activities.⁶
- b. The magazine, *Current Events*, has found that longer, more interesting presentations of news events are preferred to pithy factual ones.⁶
- c. Business girls are using the modern novel to study sociological and economic problems.⁸
- d. Study your group when selecting a technique; stories often repel the upper intellectual levels while attracting the lower.⁵

2. By recognizing the reader as a layman. B 2 f, B 3 b

- a. Talk not down but across to him. You merely have a grasp of one small corner of knowledge which he does not possess; treat him as a being of equal intelligence, possibly superior to you in other fields.⁷
- b. It is important to recognize that it is not sufficient just to state the problem. Time must be taken for a description of the situation as it appears to various members of the group. Each person must understand and feel the problem as it looks to others.⁸
- c. The treatment should be non-academic.

⁴ Hendrick, *op cit*, p. 207.

⁵ Miller, Marion, Education secretary, Child Study Association. *Interview*, June, 1934.

⁶ Sayre, Harrison B., editor of *My Weekly Reader*, *Youth's Companion*, *Current Events*, etc. *Interview*, Nov., 1933.

⁷ Cowles, Imogene, English instructor, Columbia University. *Interview*, Oct., 1933.

⁸ Elliott, Harrison S. *The Process of Group Thinking*, Association Press, New York, 1928, pp. 42-3.

Non-fiction reading material for adults should—

B. Aim to catch and hold the reader's interest (Cont.):

3. By sensing the reasons why he comes to the book for help. *B 4 b, A 2*

a. Brevity of statement is important so that the ordinary person may learn through short expositions of a great many subjects his contribution to and intrinsic place in modern life.⁹

b. People want facts rather than theories when they are looking for help with problems.¹⁰

but c. Lists of statistics are discouraging. Avoid overweighting with complicated graphs and detail. Statistics should be supplemented by simple diagrams.¹¹

4. By special literary techniques.

B 3 a

a. Suspended interest.

b. Take as concrete forms of the great problem as you can find. . . . Suppose you discover at these places life stories and human experiences which illustrate in a striking way the lift from the old darkness of slavery to the ambitions of life of American citizenship. Would not such definite experiences as these, if properly interpreted, really illuminate the whole subject in a way that no amount of theory or educational discussion or didactic commonplace ever illumine it?¹²

C.

1. Of rhythm and fluency.

B 2 d

In writing for immature people there must be short sentences. But at the same time I try to get flow of thought from one sentence to another. Rhythm is the most essential feature in writing for children.¹³

2. Of terse, simple language.

B 2 e

And when it came to style—directness, simplicity. Page loved one or two syllabled Anglo-Saxon words. . . . "There is no vehicle that can carry great literature except those plain words that roll out of our mouths when we suffer great emotions, when we weep, when we pray, when we laugh. Those words we speak in the earnest moments of our lives, those idioms that we use then—they are the clothing that takes

⁹ American Library Association. *Libraries and Adult Education*, Macmillan, New York, 1926, p. 54.

¹⁰ Flexner, Jennie M., Reader's Adviser, New York Public Library. *Interview*, June, 1934.

¹¹ Ridley, C. E. "Annual Appraisal of Municipal Reports." *National Municipal Review*, 1934, 23.24-26.

¹² Hendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹³ Rugg, Harold O., Author, professor of education, Columbia University. *Interview*, May, 1934.

Non-fiction reading material for adults should—

C. Possess literary quality (Cont.):

the common thought and in the hand of a great master immortalizes it. Keep close, close, close to the idiom!"¹⁴

Eighty-six and two-fifths per cent of all the world's fights and arguments occur because the contestants have failed to define the words over which they clash. The great tragedy of violence is that when the dead and wounded are counted it will often be discovered that many of the slain need not have died at all if only they had understood the other fellow's language. What this nation and every other needs is a good collection of five-cent words. Half-dollar and two-bit words make for misunderstanding and strife.¹⁵

3. Of conciseness.

B 2 e

Page was the enemy of the diffuse. He would say, "Do you realize that the story of the creation of the world, the biggest thing that ever took place, was told in a paragraph!"¹⁴

4. Of vitality.

B 2 c

Finally there is this most essential quality—vitality. . . . The books that will hold the attention of the casual reader of limited education will reflect the enthusiasm of the author in his subject and will bear evidence of his understanding of the psychology of his reader. It will be addressed to a flesh and blood reader; it will be something more than an exposition of the subject. . . .¹⁶

D. Possess soundness and educative merit:

1. Should have intrinsic value.

A 3 c

2. Should give a fair representation to different points of view. Should be non-propaganda.

D 1 a

3. Should leave unsettled points to work on; an introductory treatise should never create the impression of having covered the field.⁶

C 2 b

E. Appear in attractive format:

1. Booklet should be divided by captions into sections.

B 4 e

2. Attention should be paid to the cover, type, title, paper, and introduction to make people want to read farther.¹¹

B 4 a, B 4 c

Bulky, mimeographed books are unattractive. There should be a change of type for emphasis.¹⁷

¹⁴ Hendrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 210, 113.

¹⁵ Broun, Heywood. "It Seems to Me" (syndicated), *New York Herald Tribune*, April 26, 1934.

¹⁶ Felsenthal, Emma. "First Books in Many Subjects," *Journal of Adult Education*, 1:203-225, 1929, p. 210.

¹⁷ Phillips, Edna, Librarian. *Interview*, Jan., 1934.

Non-fiction reading material for adults should—

3. Far more attention should be paid to choice and reproduction of pictures. Illustrated reading material for educational purposes has been overlooked.¹⁸

B 4 a

F. Give attention to the difficulty of reading material:

1. Should be concrete. B 1 c
2. Should be written for different comprehension levels. B 1 b
3. Difficult words should be defined and illustrated. B 1 a, B 1 d

Angelo Patri's sound, simple, anecdotal, perseveringly repetitious, always human work is an example of what I mean. . . . Through such constant presentation of the subject, exact technical terms of the milder sort are creeping into ordinary vocabularies; and a wider knowledge of exact nomenclature always makes it easier to present accurate technical information.¹⁹

4. Should be non-technical, although "occasional technical words are liked, if they are made meaningful."²⁰ B 1 a
5. Paragraphs should frequently be short, since people tend to be headline readers. B 1 d

¹⁸ Hanna, Paul R., Editor of *Building America. Interview*, Feb., 1934.

²⁰ Fisher, Dorothy Canfield. *Why Stop Learning?* Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1927, p. 144.

APPENDIX I A-2

FREQUENCY OF EXPERT OPINIONS CONCERNING READING
STANDARDS CLASSIFIED UNDER THE COMBINED
LIST OF CRITERIA

| Combined List of Criteria | Criteria | Expert Opinion Classification * | Frequency of Expert Opinion | Fre- quency Rank |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| A. Content | | | | |
| 1. | Historical allusions | -- | 0 | 30 |
| 2. | Presentation of figures | B3b, B3c | 4 | 6 |
| 3. | Treatment of subject | | | |
| a. | Timeliness | A3 | 2 | 15 |
| b. | Selection of information | -- | 0 | 30 |
| c. | Quality of information | D1 | 1 | 20 |
| B. Form | | | | |
| 1. | Difficulty | | | |
| a. | Terms | F3, F4 | 4 | 6 |
| b. | Concepts | A4, F2 | 8 | 2 |
| c. | Abstractness | F1 | 2 | 15 |
| d. | Condensation | F5, F6 | 3 | 9.5 |
| 2. | Literary quality | | | |
| a. | Organization | -- | 0 | 30 |
| b. | Form and grammar | -- | 0 | 30 |
| c. | Vitality | C4 | 2 | 15 |
| d. | Rhythm and fluency | C1 | 3 | 9.5 |
| e. | Concise, simple language | C2, C3 | 2 | 15 |
| f. | Adult approach | B2a | 2 | 15 |
| 3. | Literary techniques | | | |
| a. | Dramatic techniques | B1, B4a | 6 | 3.5 |
| b. | Expository techniques | B2b, B2c, B4b | 3 | 9.5 |
| c. | Figures of speech | -- | 0 | 30 |
| 4. | Format | | | |
| a. | Type | E2 | 2 | 15 |
| b. | Size of book | B3a, E2 | 6 | 3.5 |
| c. | Cover and illustrations | E2, E3 | 4 | 6 |
| d. | Footnotes, etc. | -- | 0 | 30 |
| e. | Sections and captions | E1 | 1 | 20 |
| f. | Title of book | E2 | 1 | 20 |
| g. | Make-up of book | -- | 0 | 30 |
| C. Catching and holding interest | | | | |
| 1. | Introduction | | | |
| a. | Outline of plan | -- | 0 | 30 |
| b. | Awakening interest | -- | 0 | 30 |
| 2. | Conclusion | | | |
| a. | Summary of book | -- | 0 | 30 |
| b. | Outcome of reader interest | D3 | 2 | 15 |

APPENDIX I A-2 (Continued)

| Combined List of Criteria | Criteria | Expert Opinion Classification * | Frequency of Expert Opinion | Fre- quency Rank |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | 3. Relating subject to reader | A1, A2 | 9 | 1 |
| | 4. Emotional appeal | -- | 0 | 30 |
| | 5. Use of famous author's name | -- | 0 | 30 |
| D. | Dealing with controversial issues | | | |
| 1. | Author's display of viewpoint | | | |
| a. | Non-partisan | D2 | 3 | 9.5 |
| b. | Fair partisan | -- | 0 | 30 |
| c. | Prejudiced partisan | -- | 0 | 30 |
| 2. | Techniques of controversy | | | |
| a. | Presentation of argument | -- | 0 | 30 |
| b. | Criticism | -- | 0 | 30 |
| c. | Influence on reader | -- | 0 | 30 |

* The classification refers to the outline form of the listing of criteria in Appendix I A-1

APPENDIX I B

REASONS FOR SNAP JUDGMENT PREFERENCE AMONG
TWELVE PAMPHLETS

| Reason | Frequency | Classification * | Frequency in Classification | Rank in Classification |
|---|-----------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Good title | 42 | B 4 f | 42 | 1 |
| Interesting topic or content | 38 | A 3 b | 38 | 3 |
| Familiar author | 35 | C 5 | 40 | 2 |
| Attractive cover | 22 | B 4 c | 23 | 4 |
| Related to reader interest | 15 | C 3 | 15 | 6 |
| Comprehensive; survey of field | 14 | A 3 c | 19 | 5 |
| Related to current problems | 13 | A 3 a | 13 | 7 |
| Interesting style | 9 | B 2 c | 9 | 8 |
| Simple | 8 | B 1 b | 8 | 9 |
| Size of pamphlet | 6 | B 4 b | 6 | 10 |
| Instructional; informational | 5 | A 3 c | -- | -- |
| Identification with series or publisher | 5 | C 5 | -- | -- |
| Appearance of impartiality | 4 | D 1 | 4 | 11.5 |
| Apparent clarification of problem | 4 | B 3 b | 4 | 11.5 |
| Good table of contents | 2 | B 4 d | 2 | 13.5 |
| Well made book | 2 | B 4 g | 2 | 13.5 |
| Good type | 1 | B 4 a | 1 | 16 |
| Patriotic | 1 | C 4 | 1 | 16 |
| Attractive frontispiece | 1 | B 4 c | -- | -- |
| Good chapter and section divisions | 1 | B 4 e | 1 | 16 |

* Indicates classification in the Combined List of Criteria.

APPENDIX I C

COMPARISON OF RANKING OF STANDARDS IN COMBINED LIST
OF CRITERIA ACCORDING TO GENERAL AND SECTION
CRITICISMS OF TWELVE PAMPHLETS

| Combined List of Criteria | Criterion | General | | Section | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Frequency | Rank | Frequency | Rank |
| A. Content | | | | | |
| 1. | Historical allusions | 16 | 17.5 | 18 | 20.5 |
| 2. | Presentation of figures | 56 | 5 | 35 | 10 |
| 3. | Treatment of subject | | | | |
| a. | Timeliness | 5 | 27.5 | 11 | 26 |
| b. | Selection of information | 25 | 14 | 58 | 2 |
| c. | Quality of information | 87 | 2 | 38 | 9 |
| B. Form | | | | | |
| 1. | Difficulty | | | | |
| a. | Terms | 4 | 30.5 | 19 | 19 |
| b. | Concepts | 94 | 1 | 29 | 16 |
| c. | Abstractness | 4 | 30.5 | 22 | 18 |
| d. | Condensation | 52 | 7.5 | 40 | 8 |
| 2. | Literary quality | | | | |
| a. | Organization | 52 | 7.5 | 30 | 15 |
| b. | Form and grammar | 19 | 16 | 28 | 17 |
| c. | Vitality | 86 | 3 | 31 | 13.5 |
| d. | Rhythm and fluency | 7 | 24 | 4 | 31.5 |
| e. | Concise, simple language | 54 | 6 | 17 | 22 |
| f. | Adult approach | 2 | 35 | 2 | 34 |
| 3. | Literary techniques | | | | |
| a. | Dramatic techniques | 24 | 15 | 32 | 12 |
| b. | Expository techniques | 14 | 19 | 90 | 1 |
| c. | Figures of speech | 2 | 35 | 9 | 27 |
| 4. | Format | | | | |
| a. | Type | 5 | 27.5 | 6 | 28.5 |
| b. | Size of book | 1 | 37.5 | 0 | 37 |
| c. | Cover and illustrations | 6 | 25.5 | 0 | 37 |
| d. | Footnotes, etc. | 1 | 37.5 | 6 | 28.5 |
| e. | Sections and captions | 3 | 33 | 4 | 31.5 |
| f. | Title of book | 4 | 30.5 | 2 | 34 |
| g. | Make-up of book | 8 | 23 | 0 | 37 |
| C. Catching and holding interest | | | | | |
| 1. | Introduction | | | | |
| a. | Outline of plan | 4 | 30.5 | 18 | 20.5 |
| b. | Awakening interest | 16 | 17.5 | 51 | 4 |
| 2. | Conclusion | | | | |
| a. | Summary of book | 13 | 20.5 | 33 | 11 |
| b. | Outcome of reader interest .. | 27 | 13 | 49 | 5.5 |

APPENDIX I C (*Continued*)

| Combined List of Criteria | Criterion | General | | Section | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| | | Frequency | Rank | Frequency | Rank |
| | 3. Relating subject to reader . . . | 46 | 10 | 55 | 3 |
| | 4. Emotional appeal | 57 | 4 | 49 | 5.5 |
| | 5. Use of famous author's name . . . | 6 | 25 5 | 2 | 34 |
| D. Dealing with controversial issues | | | | | |
| | 1. Author's display of viewpoint | | | | |
| | a. Non-partisan | 13 | 20 5 | 15 | 23 |
| | b. Fair partisan | 12 | 22 | 5 | 30 |
| | c. Prejudiced partisan | 29 | 11 | 12 | 25 |
| | 2. Techniques of controversy | | | | |
| | a. Presentation of argument . . . | 28 | 12 | 48 | 7 |
| | b. Criticism | 2 | 35 | 14 | 24 |
| | c. Influence on reader | 47 | 9 | 31 | 13.5 |

APPENDIX I D: COMBINED LIST OF CRITERIA

WITH COMPONENT FREQUENCY RANKS COMBINED IN A SINGLE RANK ORDER
INDICATING COMPARATIVE IMPORTANCE

| Criterion | Snap Judgm. Rank ¹ | Section Resections Rank ² | General Criticisms Rank ³ | Expert Opinion Rank ³ | Com- bined Rank |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| A. Content | | | | | |
| Historical allusions | 28* | 20.5 | 17.5 | 30* | 30 |
| Presentation of figures | 28 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 6.5 |
| Timeliness of information | 7 | 26 | 27.5 | 15 | 15 |
| Selection of information | 3 | 2 | 14 | 30 | 6.5 |
| Quality of information | 5 | 9 | 2 | 20 | 3 |
| B. Form | | | | | |
| Difficulty of terms | 28 | 19 | 30.5 | 6 | 20 |
| Difficulty of concepts | 9 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Difficulty of abstractness | 28 | 18 | 30.5 | 15 | 26.5 |
| Difficulty of condensation | 28 | 8 | 7.5 | 9.5 | 8 |
| Organization | 28 | 15 | 7.5 | 30 | 18.5 |
| Form and grammar | 28 | 17 | 16 | 30 | 25 |
| Vitality | 8 | 13.5 | 3 | 15 | 4 |
| Rhythm and fluency | 28 | 31.5 | 24 | 9.5 | 28 |
| Concise, simple language | 28 | 22 | 6 | 15 | 13 |
| Adult approach | 28 | 34 | 35 | 15 | 36 |
| Dramatic techniques | 28 | 12 | 15 | 3.5 | 10 |
| Expository techniques | 11.5 | 1 | 19 | 9.5 | 5 |
| Figures of speech | 28 | 27 | 35 | 30 | 38 |
| Type | 16 | 28.5 | 27.5 | 15 | 22 |
| Size of book | 10 | 37* | 37.5 | 3.5 | 23 |
| Cover and illustrations | 4 | 37 | 25.5 | 6 | 14 |
| Footnotes, index, etc. | 13.5 | 28.5 | 37.5 | 30 | 35 |
| Sections and captions | 16 | 31.5 | 33 | 20 | 31 |
| Title of book | 1 | 34 | 30.5 | 20 | 21 |
| Make-up of book | 13.5 | 37 | 23 | 30 | 32 |
| C. Holding reader interest | | | | | |
| Outline of plan | 28 | 20.5 | 30.5 | 30 | 33 |
| Awakening interest | 28 | 4 | 17.5 | 30 | 17 |
| Summary of book | 28 | 11 | 20.5 | 30 | 24 |
| Outcome of reader interest | 28 | 5.5 | 13 | 15 | 11 |
| Relating subject to reader | 6 | 3 | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| Emotional appeal | 16 | 5.5 | 4 | 30 | 9 |
| Use of famous author's name | 2 | 34 | 25.5 | 30 | 26.5 |
| D. Techniques of controversy | | | | | |
| Non-partisan viewpoint | 11.5 | 23 | 20.5 | 9.5 | 12 |
| Fair partisan viewpoint | 28 | 30 | 22 | 30 | 34 |
| Prejudiced partisan viewpoint | 28 | 25 | 11 | 30 | 29 |
| Presentation of argument | 28 | 7 | 12 | 30 | 16 |
| Criticism | 28 | 24 | 35 | 30 | 37 |
| Influence on reader | 28 | 13.5 | 9 | 30 | 18.5 |
| | *0 is 28 | *0 is 37 | | *0 is 30 | |

APPENDIX II A

INSTRUCTIONS TO READERS

The purpose of the first part of this study is to discover your interest in various pamphlets, *your personal reactions* to them. There are several series of three pamphlets. Each series is upon one subject which is presented differently by each pamphlet. You will read one series at a time, will consider each pamphlet separately first, and then in comparison with others.

Your personal feelings, as expressed in the answer to "Why?" or "Reason" are even more important than your ratings. Please make them as specific as possible. But be brief in your comments. You will be asked to *rate* each pamphlet according to your interest in different parts of it. This is explained in detail on the Section Rating Sheet. Then you will *rank* the three pamphlets in order of your preference for them, as directed below.

Use this sheet only as a guide. Make out a separate plain sheet for each series, in order to answer questions I and III. Write your answer to II on the back of each Section Rating Sheet. You need not copy questions; write the outline number thus: I-A; III-B-4. And instead of writing out the full name of each pamphlet in your answers, use the key letter in the upper right corner of the cover.

Do each step in the order directed below.

- I. Take a couple of minutes to examine the three pamphlets, and record your snap judgment on the following:
 - A. Which would you like to read first? Why?
 - B. Which title and cover do you prefer? Rank in order of preference.
- II. Study each pamphlet carefully according to the outline. First, read it through rapidly at the rate you would ordinarily devote to it. If you would usually skip part of it, tell where and why.
 - A. Do you think it (1) very interesting, (2) interesting, (3) dull?
 - B. Please make specific criticisms (both favorable and unfavorable) on the way the author has presented his material, his style, the way they affect your interest.
 - C. Read through the pamphlet again, rating each section on the prepared form.
- III. Compare all the pamphlets in the series.
 - A. Which is most interesting to you? Why? Rank in order of preference.
 - B. Compare all three pamphlets on each of the following points, ranking them with 1 meaning most interesting to you in that respect and 3 least. If you are in doubt as to ranking, if all seem on a level or none is at all satisfactory, comment on this and do not rank. Remember to rank the *three* pamphlets on each of the *six* points.
 1. Which is (most, medium, least) inviting in the kind and size of print used, in appearance of page?

2. Which explains tables and numbers clearly?
3. Which is well written?
4. Which is simple and easy to understand?
5. Which meets your own needs and understanding of the subject as far as its explanations and technical terms go?
6. Which seems to touch your personal questions or experience?

APPENDIX II B

SECTION RATING

This is your direction sheet. Do not use it for rating, but keep it for reference.

DIRECTIONS: In the lines below write (a) the title of the pamphlet, (b) the code letter in the upper right corner of its cover. (c) You will be rating three pamphlets in this series. Over "Number" mark 1 for the first one examined, 2 for the second, and 3 for the third. (d) Write your own name.

Read each section, and then make a check in the column of Interest opposite the section number to show your opinion of it. Write the reason for your judgment under REASON. That remark should always indicate the section it is explaining, by writing the section number before it if it does not correspond to the number in the margin.

If the same reason occurs again, do not rewrite it. Place the number of this repeated section opposite the reason as stated the first time, in the right hand column under SAME. But analyse your opinions; do not use the last column often.

If the pamphlet has more paragraphs than are numbered on the sheet, use the opposite side of the paper. The other side will be used also for answers to question II on your other sheet of directions.

Under INTEREST, the abbreviations are *V* for Very interesting, *R* for Rather interesting, *M* for Medium, *S* for Slightly interesting, *D* for Dull.

| | Pamphlet | Letter | Number | Name |
|-------|----------------|--------|--------|------|
| Sect. | INTEREST | | REASON | SAME |
| No. | V. R. M. S. D. | | | |
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| etc. | | | | |

APPENDIX II C

EXPERIMENTAL CHECK LIST

Your name Date
 Name of the book you read

INSTRUCTIONS

Read this book all the way through. Then mark what you think of it on these sheets. There are six groups of reasons for you to mark. If you have any other reasons that are not given, write them on the last page.

On the left side of each page are reasons for liking the book, and on the right are things that you don't like about the book. Read 1 on the left side, under "Things I Like about the Beginning of this Book," and then 1 on the right side under "Things I do not Like about the Beginning of the Book." Check the reason that tells the way you feel about 1 (like this: . . X . 1). Then read 2 on the left and 2 on the right, and so on for every reason.

You do not need to check a reason if neither side is true about your book. For instance, it asks you in B-2 whether you understand the history in the book. If there is no history in the one you have read, then you can't check that reason.

If two reasons are connected by the word *or*, they are opposites and you can not check both of them. Look at A-2 and 3 just below. These questions ask you about your knowledge of the subject. If you don't know about it, you will check 2 on either the right or the left half of the paper. If you do know about it you will check 3. You could not check both 2 and 3. Think in the same way about all other reasons joined by the word *or*.

Be sure to read and to think about every single reason printed here.

A. Things I LIKE about the BEGINNING of this book.

- . . . 1. It tells clearly why this book was written.
- . . . 2. I know nothing about this subject and want to find out something.

or

- . . . 3. I know something about this subject, but would like to learn more.
- . . . 4. The beginning makes me think this book will be neither too hard nor too easy, that it will be just right.

A. Things I DO NOT LIKE about the BEGINNING of this book.

- . . . 1. It does not tell why this book was written.
- . . . 2. I know nothing about this subject and do not care to.

or

- . . . 3. I have heard too much about this already.
- . . . 4. The beginning makes me think this book will be hard to understand.

or

- . . . 5. The beginning seems too easy.

B. Things I LIKE about the MAIN PART of this book.

1. People and newspapers are talking about this subject now.
2. Enough history about the subject is given for me to understand what I read.
3. The writer does not take one side against the other; he tells me about both sides of the problem.

or

4. The writer talks for one side, but seems to tell the truth about the other.
5. There are charts, figures, and tables which are interesting and easy to read.
6. There are no charts or figures, which makes me like the book better.

or

C. Things I LIKE about the ENDING of this book.

1. The writer brings together in a short clear way all of the things he was writing about.
2. The ending is written in a way that makes me feel that I agree with the writer.

or

3. Though I do not agree with the writer, I think he has tried to be truthful.
4. The ending makes me interested in reading more about the subject.

or

5. The ending makes me feel as if I know all about this subject from what I have read.

D. Things I LIKE about the WRITER of this book.

1. He uses words I can understand.
2. He tells good stories and examples to bring out what he wants to say.

B. Things I DO NOT LIKE about the MAIN PART of this book.

1. This subject is too old. Nobody talks about it now.
2. Not enough history is given for me to understand the subject completely.
3. The writer tells only one side of the story; he does not give the other.

or

4. The writer takes one side of the story; and I do not think he is telling the truth about the other.
5. There are charts and tables of figures which are uninteresting and hard to read.

or

6. I wish there were charts and figures, to make the book more interesting.

C. Things I DO NOT LIKE about the ENDING of this book.

1. The writer does not bring together clearly what he was talking about.
2. The ending is written in a way that makes me feel that I do not agree with the writer.

or

3. I do not think the writer has been fair to the other side.
4. I do not want to read more about this.

or

5. I feel as if I learned very little about this subject from what I read.

D. Things I DO NOT LIKE about the WRITER of this book.

1. He uses many words I do not understand.
2. He does not tell any stories; the book would have been more interesting with them.

- or*
- .. .3. He does not need stories or examples to make the book interesting.
-4. He makes me feel as if this problem mattered to me.
- .. .5. He writes just enough about the subject.
- or*
-3. He gives silly stories and examples.
- . 4. He does not leave me feeling that this makes any difference to me.
5. He does not write enough.
- or*
-6. He writes too much and says little.
- E. Things I LIKE about the BOOK AS A WHOLE.
- .. .1. It is made of good paper.
- .. .2. It is well printed, with type clear and easy to read.
-3. It is broken into just enough chapters or sections to make it easy and interesting to read.
-5. Its section titles are good and helpful.
- .. .6. The cover attracted my attention.
-7. The title of the book made me want to read it.
- E. Things I DO NOT LIKE about the BOOK AS A WHOLE.
-1. It is made of poor paper.
- .. .2. It is badly printed, with type hard to read.
3. It is broken into too many sections.
- or*
- . 4. It is broken into too few sections.
- . 5. The titles for the section are not helpful.
- . 6. The cover has no life, and did not attract me.
- . 7. The title of the book did not interest me.

How did you like this book? (Place a check beside the words that best tell what you think about it on the whole.)

It was . Very interesting. . Interesting. . Not at all interesting.

If there were any reasons why you liked or did not like this book, which did not appear on these sheets, tell them briefly below and on the other side in your own words:

APPENDIX II D

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name Date ..

Sex..... Married? Age.

Check the grade nearest to the one when you left school: 8.

high school ; 2 years college College grad. Degrees

Have you attended any classes since you left school?

What kind, and how long?

Have you taken courses in economics? Sociology? Political Science?

What newspaper do you read regularly?
 What are your favorite magazines?
 How many books have you read in the past month? . . . Name one:
 Which church do you usually attend? Catholic . . . ; Protestant . . . ;
 Jewish . . . , None
 What are your political tendencies? Republican . . . ; Democrat . . . ;
 Socialist . . . ; Communist . . . ; Split ticket
 What position were you trained for? . . . What jobs have you held? . . .
 Have you read any pamphlets during the past year?

You will be reading pamphlets on four different topics. Place a check after any topics that you would ordinarily be interested in reading about:

Unemployment . . . ; War and peace . . . , Changing govern-
 ment . . . ; Stability of money . . .

Which would you like to read first? Rank the four in the order of their interest to you, with 1 as most interesting, and 5 as least interesting:

Unemployment . . . ; War and peace . . . ; Changing govern-
 ment . . . ; Stability of money . . .

APPENDIX II E

LETTER TO ASCERTAIN METHODS OF SELECTION AND EVALUATION OF CURRICULUM MATERIAL, ADDRESSED TO TYPICAL ADULT EDUCATORS

March, 1934

Attention of.

Gentlemen:

I am planning to organize classes of a non-professional nature for adults and should appreciate any information you may have about teaching material, with reference to the following points:

1. Do you prepare your own material for courses or do you depend entirely on already published materials?
2. If you prepare your own material, what criteria do you use in evaluating its success in practice?
3. If you use already published material, how do you determine its success with your groups?
4. Can you suggest the names of persons or organizations or classes doing experimental or exploratory work with curriculum material for adults on any educational level?

Yours truly,

(Signed) William Kolodney

APPENDIX III A

COMPONENTS OF PAMPHLET PREFERENCE INDEX

A. General rating of twelve pamphlets for degree of interest

| Pamphlet | Number of Votes | | | Weighted Votes | | | Sum of Weighted Votes | Number Votes | Average Rating | Rank |
|------------|-----------------|------------------|----------|----------------|-----|-----|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|------|
| | Very Int'g (1) | Inter-esting (2) | Dull (3) | (1) | (2) | (3) | | | | |
| Unemp'm't | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | 5 | 24 | 4 | 5 | 48 | 12 | 65 | 33 | 1.98 | 9 |
| C | 11 | 16 | 7 | 11 | 32 | 21 | 64 | 34 | 1.88 | 4 |
| D | 11 | 15 | 3 | 11 | 30 | 9 | 50 | 29 | 1.72 | 1 |
| Peace | | | | | | | | | | |
| E | 7 | 18 | 7 | 7 | 36 | 21 | 64 | 32 | 2.00 | 10.5 |
| F | 9 | 24 | 2 | 9 | 48 | 6 | 63 | 35 | 1.80 | 3 |
| G | 10 | 18 | 2 | 10 | 36 | 6 | 52 | 30 | 1.73 | 2 |
| Government | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | 8 | 21 | 7 | 8 | 42 | 21 | 71 | 36 | 1.97 | 7.5 |
| I | 6 | 25 | 4 | 6 | 50 | 12 | 68 | 35 | 1.94 | 6 |
| K | 10 | 16 | 9 | 10 | 32 | 27 | 69 | 35 | 1.97 | 7.5 |
| Money | | | | | | | | | | |
| O | 4 | 29 | 4 | 4 | 58 | 12 | 74 | 37 | 2.00 | 10.5 |
| P | 10 | 18 | 7 | 10 | 36 | 21 | 67 | 35 | 1.91 | 5 |
| Q | 4 | 23 | 8 | 4 | 46 | 24 | 74 | 35 | 2.11 | 12 |

B. Section rating of twelve pamphlets by forty-five readers

| Pamphlet | Number of Votes on Degree of Interest for All Pamphlet Sections | | | | | Sum† of Section Averages | Number Sections | Av. Rating | Rank |
|------------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|------|
| | (1)* | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | | | | |
| Unemp'm't | | | | | | | | | |
| B | 140 | 251 | 242 | 154 | 81 | 52.32 | 19 | 2.75 | 9 |
| C | 101 | 121 | 102 | 45 | 30 | 22.48 | 9 | 2.50 | 4 |
| D | 130 | 115 | 107 | 54 | 27 | 24.05 | 10 | 2.41 | 2 |
| Peace | | | | | | | | | |
| E | 163 | 196 | 228 | 157 | 88 | 52.80 | 19 | 2.78 | 11 |
| F | 317 | 345 | 354 | 188 | 115 | 74.45 | 29 | 2.57 | 7 |
| G | 102 | 114 | 72 | 48 | 23 | 19.00 | 8 | 2.38 | 1 |
| Government | | | | | | | | | |
| H | 204 | 216 | 294 | 136 | 124 | 58.21 | 21 | 2.77 | 10 |
| I | 182 | 346 | 247 | 104 | 91 | 56.38 | 22 | 2.56 | 6 |
| K | 220 | 207 | 197 | 95 | 83 | 45.60 | 18 | 2.53 | 5 |
| Money | | | | | | | | | |
| O | 78 | 202 | 187 | 119 | 71 | 40.29 | 14 | 2.88 | 12 |
| P | 105 | 109 | 122 | 67 | 18 | 24.81 | 10 | 2.48 | 3 |
| Q | 109 | 225 | 186 | 95 | 59 | 39.59 | 15 | 2.64 | 8 |

* (1) indicates a "very interesting" section, (5) a "dull" one.

† Votes in each column were weighted according to the number at its head. Weights in five columns were added and sum was divided by number of voters. The sum of all the resulting section averages is given in the sixth column.

APPENDIX III B

THREE DIFFERENT GROUPS' FREQUENCY OF CITING
STANDARDS USED IN THEIR EVALUATION OF
EIGHT PAMPHLETS

| Classification of Standards According to the Check List | C.W.A. | | Harlem | | Suburban | |
|--|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|
| | Fre- quency* | Rank | Fre- quency† | Rank | Fre- quency† | Rank |
| A. Introduction | | | | | | |
| 1. States purpose . . . | 39 | 11 | 45 | 1 | 25 | 9 |
| 2. New information . . | 3 | 17 | 17 | 22 | 3 | 24.5 |
| 3. Interesting old infor- mation | 51 | 9 | 39 | 11 | 29 | 1.5 |
| 4. Proper difficulty . . . | 9 | 16 | 44 | 2.5 | 22 | 12 |
| B. Body | | | | | | |
| 1. Timely | 54 | 8 | 42 | 6 | 29 | 1.5 |
| 2. Sufficient history . . | 60 | 7 | 30 | 17 | 23 | 11 |
| 3. Impartial | 38 | 12 | 35 | 14 | 9 | 20.5 |
| 4. Fair partisan | 35 | 13 | 16 | 23 | 16 | 15 |
| 5. Interesting figures . . | 85 | 5 | 32 | 16 | 10 | 19 |
| or 6. Lack of figures . . . | 1 | 18.5 | 11 | 25 | 3 | 24.5 |
| C. Conclusion | | | | | | |
| 1. Clear summary | 112 | 4 | 43 | 4.5 | 25 | 9 |
| 2. Reader agrees | 129 | 3 | 40 | 10 | 21 | 13.5 |
| or 3. Reader disagrees, but author was fair . . . | 1 | 18.5 | 5 | 26 | 4 | 23 |
| 4. Reader desires to learn more | 43 | 10 | 41 | 8 | 26 | 6 |
| 5. Reader learned much | 13 | 15 | 15 | 24 | 0 | 26 |
| D. Author | | | | | | |
| 1. Used clear words . . . | 250 | 1 | 44 | 2.5 | 27 | 3.5 |
| 2. Used good examples . | 185 | 2 | 34 | 15 | 15 | 16 |
| 3. Needed no examples . | 0 | 20 | 18 | 21 | 5 | 22 |
| 4. Made material seem important | 31 | 14 | 41 | 8 | 27 | 3.5 |
| 5. Gave enough informa- tion | 67 | 6 | 24 | 19 | 14 | 17 |
| E. Mechanics | | | | | | |
| 1. Good paper | | | 28 | 18 | 12 | 18 |
| 2. Well printed | | | 43 | 4.5 | 25 | 9 |
| 3. Well sectioned | | | 37 | 13 | 21 | 13.5 |
| 4. Good section titles . . | | | 38 | 12 | 26 | 6 |
| 5. Attractive cover | | | 21 | 20 | 9 | 20.5 |
| 6. Interesting title | | | 41 | 8 | 26 | 6 |

* Frequency of section criticisms when classified under Check List topics

† Frequency of checking item on Check List

APPENDIX III C

COMPARISON OF IMPORTANCE RANKS OF MAIN STANDARDS,
DERIVED FROM GENERAL AND FROM SECTION CRITICISMS*A. Comparison of two methods of criticism for one pamphlet, I*

| Class Criterion | Section | | General | | Difference between Ranks |
|---------------------------------|----------------|------|----------------|------|--------------------------|
| | Fre- quency | Rank | Fre- quency | Rank | |
| A 1. Historical allusions . . . | 12 | 12 | 1 | 10.5 | 1.5 |
| 2. Presentation of figures . . | 20 | 9 | 0 | 13 | -4 |
| 3. Treatment of subject | 84 | 2 | 25 | 3 | -1 |
| B 1. Difficulty | 80 | 3 | 26 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Literary quality | 44 | 5 | 30 | 1 | 4 |
| 3. Literary techniques | 105 | 1 | 11 | 5 | -4 |
| 4. Format | 4 | 13 | 0 | 13 | - |
| C 1. Introduction | 24 | 7 | 1 | 10.5 | -3.5 |
| 2. Conclusion | 18 | 10 | 2 | 9 | 1 |
| 3. Catching reader interest .. | 14 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 5 |
| 4. Emotional appeal | 22 | 8 | 4 | 8 | - |
| 5. Use of famous author .. | 0 | 14 | 0 | 13 | 1 |
| D 1. Author's viewpoint | 30 | 6 | 19 | 4 | 2 |
| 2. Techniques of controversy | 57 | 4 | 5 | 7 | -3 |
| Rho is .77. P.E. is .078 | | | | | |

B. Comparisons of two methods of criticism for twelve pamphlets

| Class Criterion | Section | | General | | Difference between Ranks |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------|----------------|------|--------------------------|
| | Fre- quency | Rank | Fre- quency | Rank | |
| A 1. Historical allusions | 22 | 13 | 16 | 13 | - |
| 2. Presentation of figures . . | 66 | 7 | 56 | 6 | 1 |
| 3. Treatment of subject . . . | 122 | 2 | 117 | 3 | -1 |
| B 1. Difficulty | 115 | 3 | 154 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. Literary quality | 107 | 5 | 220 | 1 | 4 |
| 3. Literary techniques | 177 | 1 | 41 | 9 | -8 |
| 4. Format | 24 | 12 | 28 | 11 | 1 |
| C 1. Introduction | 68 | 6 | 20 | 12 | -6 |
| 2. Conclusion | 52 | 11 | 40 | 10 | 1 |
| 3. Catching reader interest .. | 64 | 8 | 46 | 8 | - |
| 4. Emotional appeal | 56 | 9 | 57 | 5 | 4 |
| 5. Use of famous author | 2 | 14 | 6 | 14 | - |
| D 1. Author's viewpoint | 53 | 10 | 54 | 7 | 3 |
| 2. Techniques of controversy | 111 | 4 | 77 | 4 | - |
| Rho is .68. P.E. is .101. | | | | | |

APPENDIX III D

SKETCH OF THE CONTENT OF THE EXPERIMENTAL
PAMPHLETS, AND OF THE AUTHORS' METHODS OF
RELATING SUBJECTS TO READERS

The contents of each pamphlet were described by from two to four assistants. Methods employed by the writer to catch and to hold reader interest were described. The assistants' analysis form the basis for the following summaries of content and human interest techniques. Pamphlets D and O are omitted here, since they are treated in detail in Chapter V.

*Series: Unemployment**Pamphlet B—"Unemployment Relief and Public Works"*

Content: After a brief statement of the effects of the depression and of the task ahead of the government, the pamphlet attempts to give in an unbiased manner a picture of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. It deals with the administrative organization, the possible permanence of its functioning, and the projects undertaken by the F.E.R.A. Most space is given to the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Human interest techniques: The author strives to present fair, unbiased statements covering both sides of important arguments. There is a generous supply of background and facts which are calculated to hold the reader's interest.

Pamphlet C—"Uncle Sam and Unemployment"

Content: The writer gives a short history of the depression as it affects a particular family. She traces the members of the family through their experiences with different phases of the Recovery Administration, showing the positive effects of the various acts since 1932. (The data are the same as those given without dramatization in Pamphlet B.)

Human interest techniques: Most of the information is presented in narrative form, through the medium of a typical unemployed family. The topic is introduced by questions directed at the reader, tying the problem to his own experience and immediately making him part of the conditions he reads about. The language is simple. A cartoon on the first page lends interest.

*Series: War and Peace**Pamphlet E—"Who Pays for War?"*

Content: This pamphlet represents an attempt to answer the question raised in the title. It treats direct cost of armaments, reparations and war debts, and indirect effects of pensions, cost to survivors, effect on industry, finance and business.

Human interest techniques: Facts are presented in graphic and dramatic forms, showing the cost and wastefulness of war. This, with an account of the

loss of life and the suffering, is material appealing to human interest. The writer makes it apparent that everyone suffers from war, that those who gain a victory are not spared.

Pamphlet F—"The Fight Against War"

Content: This is a collection of extracts from pacifistic speeches and writings of Albert Einstein. Each extract is prefaced by an editorial note stating time, place, and occasion of utterance. Not only does the author reveal his own reasons for his anti-war feeling, but he also shows what procedures should be taken by others who would join in pacifistic movements.

Human interest techniques: The technique in this case is that of the editor rather than of the author. He selected the most important points from addresses, personal letters, and interviews. Each is headed by a caption carrying the organizing thought and is prefaced by a note. The suggestion of brevity given by asterisks between excerpts is another technique for catching the eye.

Pamphlet G—"War Resistance"

Content: These background arguments are defended: so far as war is concerned human nature can be changed; defensive war leads to aggressive war. The cost of preparedness is discussed, as are other causes of war. The pacifist's stand is given, that war resistance is the only effective instrument against war. "No war is inevitable or justified."

Human interest techniques: Arguments of opposing views are stated fairly, then answered. The writing is dramatic and emotional at strategic points. The author plays upon the horror, the suffering, and the stupidity of war.

Series: Changing Governments

Pamphlet H—"Roosevelt and the Constitution"

Content: H presents an analysis of Roosevelt's actions in office. It deals with the questions: is he a dictator? does he violate the constitution? is he "making" the laws? will the Constitution suffer from the New Deal? It contrasts the viewpoint of liberals with those conservatives who say that the Constitution should be followed literally.

Human interest techniques: Since this was written for high school students, it has a dramatic setting of a high school class that calls a professor in to answer its questions. The content is in quotation marks. Each section is introduced with a question or topic sentence, which is elaborated with concrete examples in the rest of the paragraph.

Pamphlet I—"Modern Economic Systems"

Content: Four economic systems are analyzed: Capitalism, Communism, Fascism, Socialism. The meaning and the record of each is given, concluding each section with a discussion of "weak spots." At the end faith is expressed in the "New Capitalism."

Human interest techniques. An analogy at the beginning between Capitalism

and a car that will not run catches immediate attention. The procedure then is explicit definitions, statement of the most pertinent facts, and comparison of the various systems to show similarities and differences, as well as weak points.

Pamphlet K—"The Yankee Primer"

Content. The writer attempts to show that democracy has never existed in the United States. In its stead the Hamilton Ideal, which since its beginning has supported striving for profit, has subjected the mass of people to slavery. The writer calls upon the workers to establish what he calls an Industrial Democracy. His methods for attaining this new society, as outlined, are socialistic.

Human interest techniques: The technique is one of dramatic, colloquial, simple language. The text is enlivened by colorful description and a generous use of simple comparisons and dramatic explanations. The familiar style causes violent opinions, either in favor of, or opposed to, the pamphlet. It is a style popular with labor leaders and organizers.

Series: Unstable Money

Pamphlet P—"Unstable Money"

Content: The writer establishes the point that it is impossible to discover a monetary commodity which will remain stable in price. Money, like other commodities, is liable to changes in price owing to the demand for it. There is no simple way of stabilizing money.

Human interest techniques: A literary, conversational style is combined with talking like an expert, picking holes in other experts' theories and developing one.

Pamphlet Q—"Inflation and Your Money"

Content: A background is built of the history of currency and its place in a monetary system, of banks and the function of the Federal Reserve System, of the international gold standard. Inflation is explained, its history in America and other countries pointed out, and its dangers made clear. The author favors sound currency.

Human interest techniques: The author writes simply and clearly, frequently summarizing, giving illustrations. He assumes an intelligent reader, who will agree with his common sense viewpoint, yet dramatizes his information so cleverly that an unintelligent person would agree.

APPENDIX III E

READER RANKING OF SIX QUALITIES IN THE TWELVE
PAMPHLETS*Mean ranking in series of three on—**

| Pamphlet | Attractive Looking 1 | Numbers Ex- plained 2 | Well Written 3 | Easily Under- stood 4 | Good Explanations 5 | Touches Personal Problems 6 |
|-------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Unemp'm't | | | | | | |
| B | 2.02 | 2.00 | 2.19 | 2.29 | 2.24 | 2.33 |
| C | 1.62 | 1.88 | 2.60 | 1.28 | 1.86 | 1.44 |
| D | 2.22 | 2.02 | 1.95 | 2.35 | 1.85 | 2.17 |
| Peace | | | | | | |
| E | 1.98 | 1.00 | 2.08 | 1.79 | 2.08 | 2.30 |
| F | 1.94 | 2.32 | 1.92 | 2.03 | 1.95 | 1.76 |
| G | 2.47 | 2.58 | 2.02 | 2.16 | 1.95 | 2.00 |
| Government | | | | | | |
| H | 1.95 | 2.25 | 1.92 | 1.77 | 2.09 | 1.95 |
| I | 1.95 | 1.84 | 1.87 | 1.94 | 1.67 | 1.95 |
| K | 2.13 | 1.84 | 2.14 | 2.28 | 2.21 | 2.05 |
| Money | | | | | | |
| O | 1.96 | 1.79 | 2.39 | 2.07 | 2.23 | 2.23 |
| P | 1.66 | 2.19 | 1.72 | 1.84 | 1.71 | 1.62 |
| Q | 2.33 | 1.88 | 1.91 | 2.11 | 2.05 | 2.17 |

* Each pamphlet was ranked in its series of three on six points by almost every reader. The N ranking varied from 30 to 45 people. The mean represents the average of N ranks on each point. The lower means are best.

VITA

MARGARET CHARTERS LYON was born in Columbia, Missouri, April 30, 1909. She is the daughter of Werrett Wallace and Jessie Allen Charters. The first two years of her undergraduate college work were carried on at the University of Wisconsin; she received a Bachelor of Arts degree at Ohio State University in 1930. After several years of graduate work at Teachers College, Columbia University, she was awarded the Master of Arts degree and became a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Membership in Phi Beta Kappa and Kappa Delta Pi was conferred upon her at Ohio State University and Columbia University respectively. She was a national officer of the honorary activities sorority, Mortar Board. In 1935 she was married to Ralph Muse Lyon. In 1936 she became associate educational director of the Greenville County Council for Community Development, and associate professor of education at Furman University.